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NOTES OF THE MONTH

The International—Poison Gas—Reviving Social Democracy —Paris "Left" Conference—I.L.P. Line—Towards "Two-and-a-Half"—I.L.P. Workers, Take Heed!—No Dispersion of Forces—Present Philosophy of Social Democracy—More "Disproofs" of Marxism—Covering Up the Debacle—Corresponding Rôle of Left Social Democracy—The I.L.P. "Teaches" the Communist International—Defeatism—Revolutionary Dialectics—The Communist International

WE are approaching the most decisive tests of the working-class International. The storm of the world crisis of capitalism is rising higher every month. It is only necessary to look at any part of the world situation to see where events are driving. Germany bangs the door on the League of Nations—in order to proclaim its right to an equal rôle in the race of armaments and war. The last remnants of Locarno and the old stabilisation period come crashing down. At the same time Germany makes open appeal to France for alliance in the war on Communism. Germany, Japan and the United States now stand outside the League; the League is laid bare as the British-French alliance, with their satellite states, and with Italy a more than doubtful partner. The battle of the Powers is open. The fate of the Disarmament Conference follows that of the World Economic Conference. War is on the lips of all. New accelerated armament programmes are daily announced all over the world. Industrial production takes a slight upward turn on the basis of rising armaments and inflation policies. The currency battle spreads speculative uncertainty. The gigantic machine of American capitalism under Roosevelt drives along its adventurist path to greater instability and crisis. Fascism spreads over Europe, destroying old forms, and laying bare the bestial face of predatory capitalism in its most extreme stages of decay. Social Democracy in the now visibly decomposing Second International is exposed in all its passivity and

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rottenness, as section after section passes to capitulation and collapse. The masses of the workers are seeking new paths. The capitalists are seeking new paths. But all the sham solutions based on capitalism—fascist, Rooseveltian, militarist—can only lead to greater crisis and destruction. Only Communism leads the way out. Never was there greater need for the working class in every country to unite their forces for the battle, which can only end in the working-class revolution. *Never was there greater need for the revolutionary core of the working class to stand firm as a rock, and draw in all the militant workers, around the disciplined world organisation of the international revolution, the Communist International, which is approaching its greatest battles in the further developments of the world crisis before us, and which will ride the storm.*

AT this moment the poison gas of capitalist and reformist propaganda is thick on every side to spread confusion, distrust and discouragement in the workers' ranks. Loud proclamations of the triumph of reaction, of the weakness of the workers, of the displacement of the proletariat by modern technique, of the inevitability of Fascism, of the obsolescence of Marxism, of the failure of all working-class organisations and parties—this is the music which is dinned into the ears of the workers in a thousand forms by modern capitalist ideology. And this music begins to be repeated, consciously or unconsciously, by a few of the weakest, most unstable, whimpering, vacillating, rootless or reactionary elements in the working-class movement and in the tendencies of petit-bourgeois socialism. The overwhelming impression of defeat, of the defeat inevitably consequent on the line of reformism (and which therefore carries with it the exposure and eventual destruction of reformism and the seed of the future triumph of the revolution) is felt by these elements only as defeat, and leads to a complete confusion of values, inability to distinguish between the line of reformism and of revolution, and lugubrious condemnation of both as having "equally failed." This outlook is at the very heart of capitalist propaganda at the present moment for the disintegration of the workers' ranks.

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ON this basis a new attempt is made to revive the corpse of Social Democracy, to find a new lease of life and new forms by spreading the contemptible propaganda of the " failure of both Internationals " in order to cover up the real collapse of the Second International, and in this way to hold back and confuse the awakening workers. Once again a blind alley is being attempted to be created for the leftward moving workers by the old device of establishing in the moment of difficulty and crisis, of discrediting of the old social democratic forms and of movement of the workers towards Communism, a new " Two-and-a-half International," as in 1920-3. The " Fourth International " is the term preferred by some of its adherents who wish to proclaim themselves thereby " more revolutionary " than either the Second or Third Internationals ; but in fact the experiment repeats once again in essence the old 1921 manœuvre, basing itself primarily on the most unstable and weak left reformist elements, which are wavering between the two Internationals, and seeking to appeal principally to those workers who have just left Social Democracy and are approaching uncertainly towards Communism. All the wandering and homeless fragments and grouplets, nominally based on the most divergent programmes and principles, try to draw together and consolidate one another in this Bloc of the Damned, whose only common principle becomes hostility to the Communist International.

AT the Paris Conference of Left Socialist Parties at the end of August, fourteen organisations and groups were represented. These included parties very close to the Second International, like the Norwegian Labour Party, which has already formed one Royal Labour Government, and after the present elections may no doubt be entering into another ; parties which have only very recently broken with the leading strings of Social Democracy, like the British Independent Labour Party, German S.A.P. (Socialist Workers' Party), and Dutch Independent Socialist Party ; communist renegade groups like the French Pupistes (Proletarian Unity

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Party), Swedish Kilbom " Communist Party " (the Kreuger Party), the so-called " Bureau of the Left Opposition " (Trotskist), or the German Leninbund of Urbahns; and oddments like the Russian Socialist Revolutionary left group of Steinberg. It will be seen that here is a considerable hotch-potch of nearly all very tiny groups, apart from the Norwegian Labour Party and I.L.P. This hotch-potch produced a manifesto, the I.L.P. partly dissenting, which roundly condemned " the utter bankruptcy of the policies and organisations of the Second and Third Internationals " and demanded " the recreating the international movement of the working class." On the question of the formation of a new International, seven were for the immediate decision to form it, and seven were for postponing the decision until a " World Congress " to be called by these organisations. A group of four —the Trotskist " Left Opposition," the German S.A.P., the Dutch I.S.P. and " Revolutionary Socialist Party (claiming 950 members)—issued a proclamation for a new International; and on this basis the organ of one of these (New York *Militant*, September 23, 1933), proudly proclaimed: " Left Socialist Conference: A Firm Nucleus for a New International Emerges." " Firm " was perhaps hardly a happy word to have chosen for this very unstable and unprincipled mess of left reformist fragments.

THE Independent Labour Party has endeavoured to proclaim its opposition to the move for a new International, although in practice it has acted step by step with the grouping in question. The suggestion that the I.L.P. is at present in its official policy repeating the fatal path of 1920, the path of MacDonald and Snowden, of associating with a handful of " left " groups and parties to form a temporary new International as an alternative to entry into the the Communist International, is still indignantly denied by the leadership, who are well aware that the Derby Conference decision for co-operation with the Communist International was carried in face of the opposition of the National Council

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and its line expressed by Paton. But the facts are clear. The I.L.P. is closely consorting with these enemies of the Communist International, who are denouncing the Communist International as " degenerate," " counter-revolutionary," &c., and are openly preparing a new Two-and-a-half International. Similar lines of propaganda appear in the official organ of the I.L.P. It is obvious to all that the proposed World Congress of left socialist parties, in which the I.L.P. has agreed to take part, is the preliminary to the formation of a new Two-and-a-half International.

THE I.L.P. leadership endeavours at present to cover this line with a lawyer's saving clause. " If the Third Interational," runs the Declaration of the I.L.P. at Paris, " proves unprepared to change its tactics and organisation, the time will have come to consider the formation of a new International." The meaning of this is inescapable to anyone honestly facing the facts. The same demand was made by the left reformists in 1920, who were full of verbal sympathy for " revolutionary socialism," but objected only to the " organisation and tactics " of the Communist International (the documents and resolutions would be well worth reprinting to-day to show the identity of line). The Communist International, under the leadership of Lenin, rejected the demand of the left reformists with scorn, and replied with the Twenty-one Conditions of Admission. The line of the Communist International in 1920 remains the line in 1933. *The Communist International will no more " change its tactics and organisation " to suit the left reformists in* 1933 *than in* 1920 ; *such a surrender would be a real surrender of the revolution. The Twenty-one Conditions remain the steel framework of the revolutionary workers' International.* And therefore the demand of the I.L.P. declaration is equivalent already to adhesion to the Two-and-a-half International.

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LET the I.L.P. workers note well where they are being taken, if the present line is continued, and act to save the situation before it is too late. Let them note the open sabotage and denunciation of the united front by a host of prominent leaders and holders of official positions, in glaring defiance of conference decisions, without a finger being stirred to correct them and check their mischievous activities. Let them note the permitted activity of the Lancashire Divisional Council, led by a member of the National Council, throwing overboard party decisions and directly breaking off the united front, without any intervention of the central leadership to replace them and secure the carrying out of a party policy, so that the loyal members are left vainly pleading to their own National Council for support. "Why has the N.A.C. run away from the issue?" asks the Liverpool Federation of the I.L.P. in an official letter to the *New Leader* (October 13, 1933):

> The Liverpool Federation . . . asked that the N.A.C. in conjunction with themselves and the loyal branches in the division, should seek to find the best organisational policy for the area, with the objective of forming a new divisional council. Why has the N.A.C. run away from the issue? Are they afraid to face the logical outcome of National Conference decisions?
>
> The Liverpool comrades have no desire to see those members with whom we are in disagreement outside the Party, but as officials of the party we at least demand from them that they shall not only accept the decisions of National Party Conference, democratically arrived at, but that they shall cease to use their position for the purpose of stimulating organised opposition within the Party itself, the logical outcome of which can only result in the complete disintegration of the I.L.P. in Lancashire.

The letter is printed in the central organ without comment or answer. At the same time, and in conjunction with this home policy, let them note the manœuvrings in Paris and where they are leading. It is plain to any one who is not blind to facts that the I.L.P. workers are once again being led, despite their previous decisions, into the Two-and-a-half International, in opposition to the Communist International. The attempt is once again being made—still with denials, still with

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reservations, but in fact more and more visibly and openly, through a series of diplomatic stages—to lead the I.L.P. workers into this stale trap, in order to prevent their advance to the Communist International.

IT is an international manœuvre that is taking place, as in 1920, and under corresponding conditions. That such a manœuvre was to be expected at this stage, we have already repeatedly written ; and it is happening, step by step, according to plan. The revolutionary workers must fight to defeat this manœuvre, which can only delay the victory of Communism and the revolution, and strengthen the failing forces of the Second International. It is no doubt possible that some form of temporary Two-and-a-half International may be constituted, and may flicker for a while. In fact the heterogeneous character of the component parts suggests that a whole progeny of " new internationals " may be formed for a season. The worthlessness of any such attempted association will inevitably be rapidly shown in practice. It can only end in the confusion and collapse which will of necessity follow from its unprincipled origin and basis. *But we cannot afford, and must fight to reduce to a minimum, the criminal dispersion of forces and energies which this manœuvre will represent, at a time when all forces need to be gathered around the single world revolutionary organisation of the proletariat.*

LET us examine for a moment a typical extreme right wing expression of Social Democracy at the present stage, in order to see how closely the underlying conceptions are paralleled, despite all the difference of form, in the present expressions of the left wing of Social Democracy. We may take for our purpose a view of the present phase of development as seen by the Labour Party theorist, Leonard Woolf, in the course of a review of the programme of the Socialist League, as presented in the book of Cripps and others on " Problems of a Socialist Government " (*New Statesman and Nation*, September 9, 1933). He begins with certain general reflections as follows :

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> It is an extraordinary fact—and it shows how far the collapse of civilisation has already gone—that, although the capitalist system has obviously broken down from its own inherent defects and Socialism is the only permanent solution of the world's economic distresses, Socialists have been unable to take advantage of this immense opportunity. Instead of their being able to convince people of what is a staring truth, they have never been more weak and broken since the publication of the Communist Manifesto.

" Never more weak and broken since the publication of the Communist Manifesto." " Socialists have been unable to take advantage." This is the opportunist's " profound " reaction to the collapse of reformism in the face of the advance of the world crisis of capitalism. It is evident that for him the world crisis of capitalism is no continuous process, beginning already in 1914, leading in 1917 to the first victory of the proletarian revolution, to the conquest of one-sixth of the earth, to the building of the first stages of socialism, to the advance to the second stage of the world proletarian revolution, and the building of the Communist International in preparation for this through years of gigantic struggles throughout the world and welding of the first single world revolutionary party. For him all this does not exist; there is no advance since the first weak handfuls of the International Communist League of 1847; on the contrary, the movement was " never more weak and broken."

WOOLF continues with one of the perennial exposures of the latest breakdown of Marxism:

> The collapse of capitalism, instead of bringing, as the good Marxian believed, the expropriation of the capitalist and the dictatorship of the proletariat, is bringing the proscription of the Socialist, ensalvement of the proletariat, and dictatorship of the Fascist.

Just as five years ago all the reformists (the I.L.P. included) found the " disproof " of Marxism in the soaring capitalist prosperity and American boom, so now, when the visible extreme crisis and break-up of capitalism forces itself on the comprehension of the dullest, they find the new " disproof " of Marxism because the crisis has not immediately produced the

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proletarian revolution. The blind opportunist sees only the immediate victory of Fascism; he does not see the disintegration of capitalism through this process, and the advance, through deeper struggle, through the smashing of reformism, through the forcing of the issues to the open, closer and ever closer to the proletarian revolution.

> There are several reasons for this. First, Marx himself and most Socialists failed to allow for the fact that the breakdown of the capitalist economic system, when accompanied by war, may entail such a collapse of civilisation that instead of going on to something better than the nineteenth century, we may go back to the twelfth or eleventh, to the civilisation of the savage and the jungle.

The writer is evidently unaware of Engels' famous alternatives of Socialism or barbarism, predicted half a century ago when all the worthy bourgeois reformers were wrapped in nineteenth century complacency and none but Marxists understood the meaning of this alternative, which we are living to see with our own eyes to-day.

BUT it is with the sequel that we get to the heart of the argument.

> Another reason is that Socialists were so busy quarrelling among themselves and repeating the old Marxian dogmas (many of which are now inapplicable) that they failed to see that a new tactic and strategy, and a new statement of Socialism, were required. The collapse of civilisation—and with civilisation, of Socialism—will continue if Socialists continue to quarrel about the Second and Third International, about Communism and social democracy, about dictatorship and democracy, about revolution and revisionism. These quarrels to-day are futile and academic. The work which Socialists and Socialist parties ought to do is to show that here, now and to-day, in this country and in that, a Socialist Government can take over political power with a Socialist economic plan which will cure the economic troubles caused by capitalism. If they do that in good faith and intelligence, and convince the mass of the people of their *bona fides*, they would sweep this country at any rate.

Here lies the dog buried. *Cover up at all costs the collapse of reformism, which has led to the present catastrophe in all the countries where reformism dominated; deny the issue of reformism and revolution; mix up the Second and Third Internationals*

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in one hat, and deny all such issues with lordly contempt as "futile and academic"; and then come out triumphantly with the grand solution—which turns out to be exactly the old reformist policy that has led to catastrophe.

BUT now turn from this extreme right wing expression to the present left wing expression of Social Democracy, and see if there is not, despite all the differences on the surface, a basic similarity of underlying tone and outlook. The complete defeat and collapse, not merely of reformism, of the reformist-led movement, but of the entire working-class forces equally without distinction—"never more weak and broken"—this is also the typical starting point of the present expression of left social democracy. Next, on the basis of this, the endeavour to mix the Second and Third Internationals under a single hat, and lordly contempt for the complete "failure of both the Internationals"—this is also the next stage of the argument of left social democracy. Finally, the conclusion of the argument in reformism is also, despite their revolutionary phrases, the essential conclusion of the left reformists, who fight to weaken the Communist International, complain of the "rigidity" of its organisation and tactics, just as they did in 1920, and would like to dilute the Communist International into reconciliation and unity with left reformism, in the name of a "single all-embracing International" of vague "revolutionary socialists" without the "rigidity of organisation and tactics" of the Communist International.

THE lap-dogs of left reformism try to bark like revolutionary mastiffs and to patronise and correct the Communist International. "If the Third International proves unprepared to change its tactics and organisation," declares the I.L.P., "the time will have come to consider the formation of a new International." And again: "If the Third International and the revolutionary parties outside it are to find a basis of unity, the tactics and organisational control of the 'Third' must be changed. We hope that . . . the

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Third International has realised this necessity." Most certainly the Communist International ought to learn from the I.L.P. The Communist International ought to have learned from the I.L.P. to believe in MacDonald and Snowden as leaders, instead of exposing them from the outset in its narrow fashion and demanding their removal thirteen years ago (leading to Paton's famous remark at the 1921 Conference that he would rather go to hell with MacDonald than to heaven with the Communists). The Communist International ought to have learnt from the I.L.P. to believe in the American economic miracle, in Fordism and the disproof of Marxism, instead of exposing the miracle in its narrow Marxist fashion and predicting the crash. It is obvious that on the basis of its experience the I.L.P. is in a strong position to teach the Communist International, and that the Communist International " must " do what the I.L.P. teaches. But why confine the issue to " organisation and tactics ? " Are there no basic political issues still to be settled between the I.L.P. and Communism ? Does the I.L.P. accept the political programme of the Communist International—on the dictatorship of the proletariat, on the state, on soviets, on civil war—the decisions of the foundation congresses, the Twenty-one Conditions ? If not, why discuss as if the only issue were the recent tactics in Germany or the question of the boycott ? It is obvious that this is fundamentally dishonest. *The left reformists in the I.L.P. are trying to use detail questions of organisation and tactics in order to conceal their basic political opposition to Communism, and they are further using communist renegades who lend themselves for this purpose, in order to conceal their left reformism.*

AT the basis of this whole approach is a failure to understand the essential character of the present world situation, of the development of the capitalist crisis and of the Communist International. The sapient left reformists believe that Communism is knocked out by Hitler's lash, is weak and collapsing, and therefore they come forward

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to patronise it, to point the moral of the downfall, and to offer kindly advice how to come closer to the platform of left reformism. Unfortunately for them they are making as big a mistake in their present judgment of the world situation as ever they made when they believed that the American economic miracle had disproved Marxism and solved the problem of poverty, and on this basis explained that the poor Communists, living on nineteenth century dogmas, were obsolete. Just as then they could only see the surface " prosperity " of capitalism, so now they can only see the surface completeness of Fascist victory. They can never understand the dialectical process. They see the immediate victory of Fascism. But they do not see the negative side. They do not see the disintegration of all capitalist stability that this represents. They do not see that the very ferocity of the capitalist attack is the measure of the growing revolutionary advance. They do not see the significance of the crushing exposure of the line of reformism and laying bare of the real battle. They do not see that the Communist Party of Germany—with eighty thousand active under the most extreme terror, a record without parallel in working-class history—is in reality stronger than it has ever been, closer to the winning of the unquestioned leadership of the working class, closer to the victory of the proletarian revolution.

THEY do not see what even the leaders of the bourgeoisie begin to see, and to tremble for the future after Hitler. Lloyd George, the sharpest of the bourgeois politicians, and giving as always the first lead in advance, passes the signal of alarm, advising the bourgeoisie to beware of attacking Hitler, since he represents the last hope for their system.

> He knew that there had been horrible atrocities in Germany, and they all deplored and condemned them, but a country passing through a revolution was always liable to ghastly episodes owing to the administration of justice being seized here and there by an infuriated rebel. He was neither a Nazi nor a Fascist nor a Communist. If the Powers succeeded in overthrowing Nazism in Germany, what would follow ? Not a Conservative, Socialist or Liberal régime, but extreme Communism. Surely that could not be their objective.

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> A Communist Germany would be infinitely more formidable than a Communist Russia. The Germans would know how to run their Communism effectively.
>
> (Lloyd George, speech at Barmouth, *Times*, Sept. 9, 1933.)

The same line is expressed by the leading American banker, A. H. Wiggin, Chairman of the American Bankers' Committee on German loans, and former Chairman of the Chase National Bank, the largest bank in the world, at a private conference of bankers and Wall Street representatives (reported as " from unquestionable sources " in the New York *Daily Worker*, October 6, 1933) :

> The greatest danger to the world to-day is the possible overthrow of Hitler, since this would mean the sweep of Communism over Europe.

IT is in this world situation, in these sharpening issues and growing crisis of capitalism and basic struggle, in the menace of fascism and advance to war, that the need of the Communist International is greater than ever and its rôle of decisive importance for the whole future. Every attempt to weaken the Communist International is a crime against the the working class, is directly to work for the defeat of the working class. Not weakening and dilution of the revolutionary programme with the sloppy confusions of left reformism, but maintenance of the fullest revolutionary intransigence, of the full revolutionary line in the storms ahead ; not weakening of the organisation in the name of " autonomy " and " tolerance " and " liberty," but maintenance of the strongest centralisation to fight as a single world army : these are the essential needs of the present period more than ever. Within this basis, the fullest collective working and discussion and initiative and proletarian democracy ; but to those who seek to break this basis, war. Let the left reformist and miscellaneous groups and fragments continue to vacillate and manœuvre and enter into their short-lived unprincipled combinations ; these can only end either in sterility or in eventual return to the Second International. But we must fight that the tens of thousands and hundreds of thousands of workers

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who are awakening to the revolutionary struggle, who are awakening to the meaning of the crisis and of the collapse of reformism, who are responding to Communism and the battle of Communism, who are stirred by the example of the German Communist Party, who are responding with all their being to the stand of Dimitrov, living representative of the Executive Committee of the Communist International, shall not be misled and confused and driven back to reformism by these manœuvres, but shall find their way to the common platform of the Communist International, and become part of the organised revolutionary army. The exposure of the reformist parties is again reaching wide numbers, as in the years immediately after the war. The united front is growing. The recognition of the necessity of the united revolutionary party, of the united Communist Party as a section of the Communist International, is growing. Along this path we shall conquer. Along this path International Communism will emerge as the final victor of the world crisis. "The last fight let us face. The Internationale unites the human race."

R. P. D.

TO FRIENDS OF "THE LABOUR MONTHLY"

THE LABOUR MONTHLY has now maintained existence and continuous publication for over twelve years. During this time it has won many friends and supporters in all parts of the country, as well as outside England, and has been able to establish its position as a recognised part of the forces of the British working-class movement.

But for this very reason it is now necessary to broaden the basis of support of the LABOUR MONTHLY, to strengthen its contact with friends and supporters in the working-class movement and their active participation in its work, and to draw all those who are sympathetic into the common work it is attempting to accomplish.

What is the purpose of the LABOUR MONTHLY? What is its task? Is it simply to provide a magazine for the entertainment of readers? Obviously not. Its task is a political and organising task. The LABOUR

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MONTHLY is a part of the working-class movement, existing to help forward the class struggle, the fight for the line of revolutionary Marxism, to promote understanding of the line, to encourage discussion and clearing of the issues among the widest possible circles, to draw all those who are advancing towards revolutionary understanding into the common front, and in this way to strengthen the revolutionary working-class front.

This work can only be effectively realised as a collective work. At the present time, with the development of the united working-class front, and with the advance of increasing numbers towards Marxism and revolutionary understanding, this work becomes more than ever important. But as the rôle and task extends with the development of the movement, it is essential for the basis of the LABOUR MONTHLY and of those engaged in carrying forward its work to be broadened. We want to draw all those who are sympathetic and interested into the common work. We want our readers to take an active interest in the LABOUR MONTHLY as a common achievement and regard it as a common work.

For this reason we propose to call an informal conference of friends and supporters of the LABOUR MONTHLY. The conference will be held on **Sunday, December 10, at 3 p.m.,** at the **Conway Hall,** Red Lion Square, London, W.C.1.; further details will be given in the December issue.

At this conference we want to throw open all the questions of the LABOUR MONTHLY and its work to our readers who are interested and ready to assist. The group who have been actively responsible for its conduct will give account of their stewardship, which they have regarded as a trust for the wider movement. We want to throw open all the problems, whether political, practical or financial, for discussion, review and suggestion; to explain how we have run things so far, give all necessary facts of the position, what we have achieved, where we are weak; and to discuss how we should best do in order to help and strengthen the work, and gain new forms of support.

This discussion needs to be both political and organising, both theoretical and practical. We need to blow skyhigh the old false separation of "political" questions and of "organising" or "business" questions, leading to the consequent tendencies either to discuss general policy in the air, without practical assistance to the work, or to relegate business questions to a narrow routine without political significance. It is evident that in all revolutionary work both are inseparable. There can be no serious political work without heavy organising work; and there can be no serious political interest that does not express itself in direct concern with the practical organising tasks on which the transmission of the political line depends. The work of a seller of the LABOUR MONTHLY is obviously as indispensable a part of the whole as that of an editor.

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Therefore just those who are politically interested, politically sympathetic to the LABOUR MONTHLY, should get down close to the practical organising problems of the LABOUR MONTHLY as vital problems of concern to all, and requiring to be tackled by all.

At this conference, accordingly, we need first to reach as rapidly as possible complete clearness on what is the distinctive rôle and task of the LABOUR MONTHLY in the working-class movement. Then, as soon as we have reached common ground on this, we want to get close down to the practical organising questions of how best to accomplish this work, and how all can help :

(1) to draw all friends and sympathisers into activity and direct participation ;

(2) to find new grounds for expansion, develop circulation, secure more regular help in all directions for spreading the LABOUR MONTHLY ;

(3) to meet financial problems, enlarge the numbers of donors and guarantors, win support from within working-class organisations, consider the possibility of further advertisements, &c. ;

(4) to consider further ways in which the LABOUR MONTHLY can assist the working-class movement.

It is hoped that as a result of the conference new active forces will come forward who will be willing to assist regularly with the work of the LABOUR MONTHLY in one direction or another, and that some kind of working group may be formed.

The large proportion of our readers, who are outside London, and who will not be able to take part directly in the conference, are invited to write in, and their suggestions will be brought before the conference ; to all who are interested, and who write, enclosing postage, we will forward the material placed before the conference and the results of the conference discussion with suggestions of how they can assist further.

The conference will be open to all readers of the LABOUR MONTHLY. We are not advertising it outside the LABOUR MONTHLY, as it is intended only for those directly interested in the work of the LABOUR MONTHLY and wishing to assist further.

A further announcement will be made in the December issue.

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THE NEW ATTACK AND THE NEED FOR UNITY

By HARRY POLLITT

NEVER have the National Government reacted so promptly to the lead given them by the Trades Union Congress and the Labour Party as they have done in the days following the Brighton and Hastings Conferences.

The delegates had barely got back to their homes before the Government launched its new attacks, based upon the rejection of the necessity of building up a fighting united front of all workers that was carried through under the leadership of the reformist leaders.

At the Brighton Trades Union Congress not a single practical measure was taken by the Trade Union leaders to mobilise the trade unionists to face the immediate issues that face them. Endless sermons on "Democracy or Dictatorship," and finally decisions reached that actually amount to no united front to be built up of the reformist workers, never mind the revolutionary workers.

A few weeks later the Labour Party Conference takes place at Hastings. Again the same theme is taken up. Every leader places his hand on his heart and swears to the ruling class that he has no use for either Fascism or Communism. At Hastings the immediate situation with all its menace does not exist for the delegates. Only 1935 and the need to prepare for the General Election. Of course there was some toy sword play between the Platform and the "Lefts," but it was only play, and the "big" opposition was soon squashed by methods, threats, intrigue, which might give Hitler himself something to think about and envy.

The united front was rejected. All sincere efforts to build up resistance to attacks on standards, against Fascism and War, were dismissed by the cultured Mr. Shinwell, known in official Labour circles up to August, 1931 as "Mr. MacDonald's earphone," as being "twopenny halfpenny organisations." A list was prepared of organisations that have to be excommunicated by Bell, Book and Candle, and open threats made to deal with any members of the Labour Party who dare to remain true to working-class principles, and associate with any efforts that are made to build up resistance against the capitalist attacks.

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The speech of Mr. Citrine at Brighton in which he gave the lead for the rejection of the united front, and objectively came out in full support of capitalist dictatorship, was described as a historic speech, and demands made for it to be published as a pamphlet.

The speech of Mr. Henderson at Brighton on the War situation, which was simply a eulogy of the League of Nations, under whose leadership the war situation has so rapidly sharpened, was also described " as an historic speech," and demands made for it to be published as a pamphlet.

It is true that these speeches were historic, but not in the sense that that word was meant to convey. They both represented the line of the leaders of the Trades Union Congress and the Labour Party. After all that has happened in Germany, and the entirely changed international situation that has taken place; after all that is happening in America, where preparations for the greatest economic war against Britain are being made night and day; after all the loss of wages, speeding up, horrors of the Means Test, preparations for new attacks on the workers' standards through the new Unemployed Act, inflation, and the open line of the Railway Companies to attack wages and conditions, the real historic character of Citrine's and Henderson's speeches is that they corrupt, split and disarm the working class at the most vital moment in its history.

The desire for united action was never stronger amongst the working class. The will to fight was never stronger. I believe that all of us have underestimated the salutary lesson and impression that has been inflicted upon the British workers through the suppression of the German Trade Union and Co-operative Movements.

Everywhere there is an instinctive feeling that in Britain too we are moving into a new period. But precisely because of the methods of the election of delegates; the way the agendas are framed; the way the actual proceedings take place; and, above all, the anti-democratic way the official movements are run, this feeling for united action is prevented from being expressed in these official conferences.

But the workers are not having to wait long before they see how the ruling class act, and how they extract the fullest possible value from the services rendered to them by the reformist leaders.

A Hunger March is arranged in South Wales to protest against the Means Test, and to put forward the following demands before the responsible Area Public Assistance Committee at Bridgend :—

(1) Full benefits to all unemployed on transitional payments, irrespective of family income.

(2) Full benefits for all those reduced or stopped, or who have not qualified for benefit.

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(3) Ten per cent. increase in the scale of relief, and all relief to be paid in cash.

(4) Two cwt. of free coal for all unemployed families.

(5) Demand to the Glamorgan County Council to give two free meals per day, and one free pair of boots every six months to all working-class school children.

Now, there is in this county a Labour Council *with a majority*. Mark what happens. The marchers set off and they are followed by an aeroplane equipped with wireless transmitting apparatus: 500 police are in attendance with 20 buses for the police, and numerous mobile police cars. The marchers, proceeding from the various valleys are allowed to proceed to certain points, when their ranks are broken up by the police in order to prevent them all concentrating at the place, from which the united marchers' contingents from all the valleys will then proceed to march into Bridgend to place their demands before the competent authorities.

Perhaps there was no need for such a march? Perhaps it was a stunt of the wicked Communists to exploit the sufferings of the unemployed in order to please Moscow?

Let the Chief Public Assistance Officer speak:—

> Destitution is reaching levels higher than ever before, and is now engulfing classes of the population hitherto regarded as being well above the poverty line . . . . .
>
> As the rulings in transitional payments reveal personal savings have vanished, and in fully 75 per cent. of the homes in Glamorgan cessation of current income from either wages, unemployment benefit or public assistance even for a week, means the beginning of starvation.—(The Chief Public Assistance Officer for Glamorgan, Mr. Arthur Griffiths.)

To prevent this appalling destitution getting worse a Hunger March is organised. After the Hastings and Brighton Conference decisions the local Labour Councils take their cue and try to sabotage the march. Then the Chief Constable and County Council step into line, so that aeroplanes, that used to be thought as only used for such purposes on the North-West Frontier of India, are suddenly seen at work in South Wales.

True, they didn't bomb the marchers, they only stopped them from marching; but it's an easy step to the bombing stage, as we shall learn from bitter experience as the class struggle sharpens this winter.

Perhaps there is no money in the country? Perhaps the marchers were asking far too much? I would only like readers to note the following:

Speaking of an advertisement in a New York store offering handkerchiefs at sixty dollars a dozen, roughly £12 at par, another advertisement in the *Manchester Guardian* in August, written by "Callisthenes" on behalf of Selfridges, the big London Emporium, states regarding the character of the handkerchiefs offered for sale at Selfridges:—

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> Some people may be curious to know how such a price compares with the highest in Selfridges' handkerchief department. This department, which, perhaps we may mention here, is one of the most successful in the world, has in stock handkerchiefs at £3 13s. 6d. each or £42 per dozen.
>
> We have not advertised these handkerchiefs, nor, perhaps, would we consider the present the best time for doing so. In the main this is a popular house, and at a time when popular prices are more than ever the desire of the public we might not choose to advertise an article for which there could be no popular demand.

There it is. In South Wales " destitution is reaching levels higher than ever before." In Selfridges they are selling handkerchiefs at £3 13s. 6d. each, and the department that sells them " is one of the most successful in the world." Every time " you make a Communist you make a Fascist," says the humbug Citrine. No united front at any price, says Morrison ; we want to assure every business man that we " want to treat them as men and brothers."

Now let us take Belfast. October 11, 1932, saw the unemployed come on the streets and in great struggles and battles force the Belfast authorities to make big concessions to them. It was decided this year to organise a hunger march in which the unemployed from Dublin would also participate and demonstrate the unity in struggle of all Irish workers in spite of the decisions of Northern Ireland and the Irish Free State, and also in spite of religious differences. What happens ? All meetings are banned in Belfast. The Belfast unemployed leader is placed under preventive arrest. The marchers from Dublin are arrested and taken back over the border by armoured cars.

Sir Stafford Cripps, the leader of the " Left " Socialist League, must have chuckled to himself when he thought how well the National Government had remembered the speech he made in Parliament last Autumn when he begged it not to give the unemployed any more concessions through adopting such measures as they had done at Birkenhead and Belfast last year.

And now come even more sinister moves against the working class, as seen in the proposals that are to be discussed in the Glasgow City Council. The Chief Constable of Glasgow is seeking to get powers to prohibit demonstrations, prohibit the playing of revolutionary tunes, and the carrying of banners, flags, poles, sticks. Permission is also sought to divert demonstrations from their routes, to control all outdoor meetings, with the right to prohibit also all indoor meetings, whether in halls, tents or dwelling houses.

What has taken place in South Wales, Belfast and in Glasgow marks the opening of a new period of class struggle. This is the logical continuation of the operation of the 1819 Act and the Edward III. Act begun

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after the great national hunger march last year, against Tom Mann and Emrys Llewellyn.

All this is taking place not in India, Germany or Austria, but in Free Democratic Britain. *And it is all taking place after the refusal to build up the fighting united front by the Brighton and Hastings official Labour Conferences.*

What does it all mean? The Press is full of boosts about a Trade Revival! Chamberlain makes speeches about the possibility of a Budget with a surplus! Why, then, all these new measures against the elementary right of public assembly and free speech?

Because the actual facts are such that the ruling class know in reality that the crisis is not easing up, but is sharpening.

That to meet the intensive trade war now being launched by Britain's trade rivals, and to prepare for the coming new war the Government are not only preparing for the greatest attacks on all the existing standards of the workers, they are preparing to smash and destroy the working-class movement so as to be able to take part in the new war with the least possible dangers on their Home Front.

To those who have cried, as the excuse for their treachery: "the workers cannot fight in a time of economic crisis"; to those who have sabotaged hunger marchers because they "didn't like to see half-starved men and women on the road who could do no good"; to those who always declare, to hide their own responsibility for the situation the workers are in: "the workers are apathetic and won't fight"—Well, the measures the Government are taking are the real indication that the workers will fight, that starved as they are they have got guts, and that when they do fight they can fight.

The drastic character of the measures now being taken are the Government's appreciation of the significance of all the recent strikes and hunger marches, and the growing desire for united action on the part of the workers. And, drastic as they are, they can be beaten.

The coming months are going to be decisive as to the course of events for a long time. There is now a special responsibility upon every revolutionary and militant-minded worker in the country. The warning of aeroplanes in South Wales, armoured cars in Belfast, and the measures contemplated in Glasgow cannot be lost on any sincere worker, no matter to what organisation he belongs.

We cannot be blind either, to the fact that the line of the Government is being carried forward, just when in a variety of ways Fascist and anti-Socialist propaganda is being developed on a far wider scale than is realised or understood. Blackshirts and Greenshirts, *Everyman* and *New Britain*, all have one common line. They are against Socialism and the Class Struggle.

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They need to be exposed as part of the apparatus, consciously being developed to carry through, step by step, and stage by stage, a series of measures designed to smash the organised resistance and the united front organisations now being slowly built up by the working class under the leadership of the revolutionary workers.

The big urgent thing now is to defend every existing right of meeting, demonstration, and working-class demand with the united power of the workers. It can only be done concretely around those issues which the workers put forward as being their immediate demands.

We can overcome the obstacles placed in the way of building the united front by the reformist leaders, if at once the significance and menace of the new measures are explained to the workers and mass activity developed. Unless we can do this and successfully defend and retain every existing working-class right of agitation and organisation to achieve our demands, we shall pay dearly for it in the months to come.

Already much valuable time has been lost. There is not another moment to lose if the workers are to be organised to meet successfully the heavy tasks and conflicts that threaten them. We must launch such a wide protest movement against the suppression of the hunger marches and the threats to free speech and public assembly as will bring millions into activity and show in living practice that we are the real defenders of workers' democracy. That just as many of the rights we now possess were fought for by the pioneers, like in the Chartist days, so we will retain them in the same way, strengthened by the generations of experiences and struggles that have taken place since then.

From every factory, labour exchange, trade union branch and trades council ; from every local labour party and co-operative guild, resolutions of protest and affirmations to defend free speech and support militant working-class activity should be adopted.

Alongside this the campaign must go forward to reach common agreement upon demands for wage increases and increases in unemployment benefits, for shorter hours without wage cuts, for work schemes at trade union rates of pay, and the putting into immediate operation of all local council relief schemes that have been held up by the National Government. For the restoration of maternity and health benefits to the disqualified unemployed workers, for rent control at pre-war rates, for school-feeding for children without deductions from relief, for full support in the fight against Fascism and War.

From such a campaign, conducted as a life-and-death matter to the whole working class, could come a great national united front conference representative of every section of the working class movement that would be a most powerful weapon in the further extension and building up

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of a really effective united front that would give the guarantee of mass action being organised. Meetings, demonstrations, leaflets, marches, and in this way with the unity of the employed and unemployed being secured, and all the essential preparation work being put in, mass strikes also would then become possible, which would not only win the demands of the workers, but signify an enormous strengthening of all those working-class forces working for the overthrow of capitalism and the ending of capitalist domination for all time.

To those who say it cannot be done I would only remind them that when the working class launched a score of protests against the breaking of the Trade Agreement with the Soviet Union, for the release of the Meerut prisoners, that when the workers have backed up effectively the various hunger marches and strikes, very important victories have been won and the employers and National Government forced to do many things.

We can extend this if once the seriousness of the situation is realised and we all go into the job as we have never done before, each one of us feeling our personal responsibility, then in spite of the Citrines and Hendersons; in spite of the National Government, we can develop a great powerful working-class movement that will forge the way and the organisation that can and will beat our class enemies and those who, at this critical moment, dare to prevent the fighting united action of the working-class from being organised.

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IS QUEEN ANNE DEAD?

By N. B. HUNTER

THE "Tithe War" has become, of recent years, an established item of "news." The tales of forcible seizures of property, of boycotted auctions, of bailiffs encamped for weeks at a time, on guard over growing crops, of protest demonstrations when tithe cases have come to court, such happenings have been eagerly seized upon by the enterprising newspaper man, but more often than not distorted into merely a "story." For the revolutionary working class the present conflict between titheowners and tithepayers has an importance of its own.

In the Middle Ages tithe was a tax in kind amounting to one tenth of the annual produce of land and labour. Its collection was enforced by law, and it was paid to the parish priests and the monasteries, upon whom devolved in those days the responsibility for maintaining such rudimentary "social services" as the beginnings of an educational system and the relief of the poor, as then existed. With the expropriation of the religious orders at the Reformation a large amount of tithe formerly due to the monasteries was assigned to lay owners. In some cases these were educational and other corporations, such as the colleges at Oxford and Cambridge; in others private persons acquired the tithes by gift or purchase from the Crown.

To-day the principal tithe-owner is Queen Anne's Bounty, a statutory body established in 1704 to collect ecclesiastical tithe on behalf of the parochial clergy and the bishops. Since the Tithe Act of 1925 has made a permanent settlement of the tithe rent-charge, the Bounty has had an annual income from this source of £2,077,991. The claims of other tithe-owners bring the total tithe rents up to some £3,300,000 annually. Practically the whole of this huge sum is now a direct charge on agriculture, payable from the proceeds of this industry.

But these same proceeds have been falling heavily during the crisis. The Ministry of Agriculture gives the following estimates of the value of agricultural produce sold off the farms in England and Wales:

	£
1928-29	221,370,000
1929-30	216,230,000
1930-31[1]	197,400,000

Tithe rent-charge is now fixed by the 1925 Act, and as agricultural produce falls in value, so does the tithe absorb a larger and larger proportion of the produce of the land.

[1]Latest year available owing, says the Ministry, to a revision of the basis in relation to the 1930-31 Census, which is still proceeding. But assuredly the figure will show a further fall.

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This phenomenon of fixed charges and deteriorating prices in the sphere of agriculture is world-wide, so far as the capitalist parts of the world are concerned, and tithe is only one of the several varieties of fixed charge which are eating into the income of those who till the land. In England the heaviest of the fixed, or quasi-fixed, burdens is rent, which amounts to over £35 millions annually. Other heavy charges are mortgage interest and bank interest on current advances. State taxation and, to some extent, local government rates (though the latter were somewhat abated by Churchill's derating Act) belong to the same category of fixed charges.

The ever-widening "scissors" between fixed charges and the descending prices of farm products is the basis upon which have developed powerful movements of resistance on the part of the poorer farmers, both owners and tenants, in most capitalist countries. The condition of the poor farmers in Germany is typical of many countries. A detailed examination of the German agricultural situation was made by Paul Massing in these columns last year (July, 1932, pp. 439-489). Massing concluded his article upon a dramatic note:

> The German village is politically awakened. Since the peasant war there has never been such a radicalisation of the peasant masses. The political parties of the centre are going out of existence; immediately facing each other stand the radical parties on either wing. In the coming great social struggles in Germany the village will take a no less important place than the centres of industry. After many decades Germany has once again its revolutionary peasant movement.

During the present year the struggle of the American farmers against the crushing burden of mortgage-interest has reached a new stage of intensity. In the United States the number of farmers each year reduced from the status of landed proprietors to that of tenantry, or even to serfdom, has now passed the 200,000 mark. The farmers' income has dwindled from seventeen thousand million dollars in 1919 to barely five thousand million in 1932. Yet the total out on agricultural mortgage is still estimated at the colossal figure of $12,000,000,000, not including accrued interest. Against this enormous indebtedness the proclamation, under the Roosevelt regime of *moratoria*, succeeds no more than in temporarily stemming, here and there, the rising tide of revolt. In practice a *moratorium* is applied with discrimination to the benefit only of the larger farmers who have friends at court.

Little wonder that the mass movements of resistance on the part of the small farmers are developing with whirlwind rapidity, and are manifesting an increasingly revolutionary character. As early as the autumn of 1932 the great strike of the Wisconsin farmers against the miserably low prices offered them by the Milk Marketing Trust was characterised by the utmost militancy. Well-organised and extensive picketing was

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resorted to by the farmers (who were aided by the revolutionary workers from the neighbouring cities). The strike was met with the employment of the armed forces of the State, and the use of machine-guns, airplanes, and tear gas. Hundreds of striking farmers suffered arrest.

Since then the mass resistance of the American farmers has not ceased to grow.

Here in England, of the various burdensome fixed charges which weigh upon the farmers, it is the tithe which has thus far called forth the most determined resistance. In comparison with the mass movements of farmers in many other countries the movement against the payment of tithe may appear of not very great importance, but it is nevertheless already launched upon a fairly extensive scale and has displayed in many areas openly revolutionary features.

The total number of farmers who *own* their land (and it is only owner-farmers who pay tithe; in the case of tenant farmers it is the landlord who is liable), is about 70,000. During the last few years in a number of counties, local associations of farmers have developed with the avowed objective of seeking relief from the burden of tithe. All these movements are now centred in the National Tithepayers' Association, the president of which is the Rev. R. M. Kedward, a nonconformist minister who sat in the last Parliament as Liberal Member for the Ashford Division of Kent. The Association now has some 11,000 members. Some of these may be landowners and other non-farmer tithe-payers, but the bulk are farmers. Thus it will be seen that some 15 per cent. of owner-farmers are already inside the organised movement, which continues to grow.

In 1930 Mr. Kedward introduced a Bill (which was rejected), the main provision of which was that tithe rent-charge in excess of 3s. in the pound on the assessed annual value of land should be remitted. Both the Central Landowners' Association and the National Farmers' Union have consistently, since the passing of the 1925 Tithe Act, agitated for some sort of concession in the matter of tithe, but both this agitation and Mr. Kedward's Bill only aim at securing a reduction of tithe where it happens to be particularly high, regardless of whether the reduction would go to swell the income of a wealthy landlord or of a small farmer on the verge of bankruptcy.

Meanwhile these small farmers have had in many cases no option but to decline to pay tithe. It was stated in the *Daily Herald* (August 2, 1933), that "in the last few months nearly 5,000 tithe orders—warrants for distraint—have been issued. Not ten per cent. of them has been executed."

The small farmers are in case after case forcibly resisting these warrants for distraint. In one instance 40 police had to be imported to seize

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three fat bullocks for tithe. Some little time back the distrainers attempted to hold auctions to dispose of the livestock and goods they had seized. The farmers organised a boycott of these auctions or attended in force and threw ridicule over them by putting up bids at insignificantly low levels, forcibly preventing any one else from raising the bids. The result was that the bailiff's men had to abandon the auctions and retire ignominiously, often being almost lynched in the process by the infuriated farmers.

When seizures are threatened an army of farmers, together with their workers, appear on the scene summoned by prearranged signals, and armed with sticks and guns; the bailiffs' men and police are attacked, and at least in one case these men were imprisoned in a barn until a promise was extorted from them to retire empty handed.

The revolutionary nature of the struggle is shown in addition by the fact that in many cases war-like barricades have been thrown up, trenches dug across farm approaches and gates buttressed with tree trunks. In one case wire was strung along the entrance gates and electrified from the magneto of a car.

What will be the outcome of the struggle over tithe? Are the small farmers, upon whom the tithe bears with such crushing weight, likely to win their "war"? Is Queen Anne's Bounty—chairman Mr. George Middleton, ex-trade union official, now enjoying a salary of £1,200 a year—going to give up the attempt to collect the parsons' claims against the farmers? To answer such questions it will be necessary to examine the class-structure of British agriculture and to take stock of the forces engaged.

The dominant class drawing income from land are the landowners. The ownership of land is extremely concentrated: some 2,000 people own 50 per cent. of the total agricultural land in Britain. But this class is now to all intents and purposes identical with that comprising the big financiers and industrialists. The fusion has been going on steadily for a century and more. It is now complete. On the one hand territorial magnates, such as the Earl of Derby, whose ancestors acquired their estates in feudal times, are to-day directors of banks and trusts, while with scarcely an exception, all the "captains of industry," the merchants and the bankers who have amassed large fortunes, have hastened to acquire landed estates.

Thus the landowners in Britain, just because they have, as a class, a stranglehold on all branches of the national economy, are always able to reinforce the power, economic and political, which they have acquired in the countryside by calling in at need all the resources of State power.

Next in wealth and influence to the landowners come the capitalist farmers. If a holding as large as 100 acres be taken for convenience as

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indicating a capitalist farmer, the numbers of this class must be at least 80,000—probably 100,000 is nearer the mark, excluding their families. This class is mainly composed of tenants, though the proportion who own their land is not negligible. But whether they are owners or tenants, they exist mainly on the labour of their hired workers, to whose interests theirs are thus necessarily opposed. Naturally therefore it is essential to the capitalist farmers that they have always the power of the landlords on their side against the 700,000 landworkers, and it is inconceivable that this class should ever pursue with vigour a policy which the ruling class of landowners did not accept.

It is otherwise with the small farmers who either employ labour only to a very limited extent (the semi-capitalists of the countryside), or employ no labour at all, cultivating their land entirely by their own labour and that of their families. These latter correspond to the true peasantry of certain parts of Europe, and are mainly survivals of a less developed economic system. In England and Wales there are now about a quarter of a million holdings under 50 acres, which gives a fair indication of the numerical strength of this class, now fighting desperately to retain possession of its means of production. The interests of these " family " farmers are in no way opposed to those of the agricultural workers, since they cannot hire their labour. On the other hand the increase in the real burden of fixed charges, such as tithe, tend to bring them up against the landlords and their allies, the tithe-garnering parsons of the Established Church.

To complete the picture a word must be said about those elements which are neither pure capitalist nor pure peasant. There are in fact a fairly large number of farmers who, although they have to work hard themselves, and suffer from the burdens of mortgage and bank interest, rent, and tithe, which absorb an increasing proportion of the fruits of their own labour, nevertheless are able also to engage a limited amount of hired labour. Thus there are 60,000 farms between 50 and 100 acres in extent in England and Wales. On most of these hired labour is employed although the farmer himself also performs arduous manual work.

This semi-capitalist class is unstable in its outlook. Writing of the " middle " peasantry in 1925, Comrade Stalin observed :

> The middle peasant is a man whose motto is " wait and see." He watches out, till he discovers which party is the stronger ; he watches out, and not till we have gained the upper hand, and have driven out the great landowners and the bourgeois, is he ready to enter into an alliance with us. Such is his nature as a middle peasant. (*Leninism*, Vol. I., p. 403).

Thus from an analysis of the class structure of agricultural society in Britain, an indication is obtained as to why of the several kinds of onerous fixed charges, tithe alone has so far called forth an organised

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resistance. It is not so much that it is the most burdensome, as that the principal beneficiaries are the clergy, whereas in most other cases it is the ruling class of landowning, financial, and industrial interests which is pressing upon the farmers. Powerful as the Church of England still is, this sworn ally of the bourgeoisie, it is yet not so powerful as that class itself, and in the event has shown itself less capable of exacting its full pound of flesh. To some extent that may be more or less accidental. The anomalous state of the law relating to distraint for tithe has left many loopholes by which farmers have evaded payment without their being arrested. But after all the law itself is made by the ruling class, which wastes little time in altering it when its own interests are directly affected.

At the present time the movement against the tithe cannot be regarded as on a firm class basis. This applies especially to the leadership. Neither Captain Pitt-Rivers nor Lady Eve Balfour, whose names have become well known in connection with the tithe conflict, belong to the class of small farmers. Still less can the Central Landowners' Association and the National Farmers' Union be regarded as representative of their interests. Indeed it is just this permeation of the movement by capitalist and *rentier* elements which creates the danger to the successful prosecution of the small farmers' struggle against the Bounty. Although, up to a point, such elements may hope to obtain advantages for themselves at the expense of the parsons, or perhaps, like the Fascists who bobbed up recently on an Essex farm, they may regard the tithe dispute as something from which political capital may be made by skilful demagogy, in the long run they must defer to the over-riding necessity for the ruling class to conciliate and support its faithful (and useful ally) the Church. Nor must it be forgotten that if, as individuals, certain persons of the ruling class have to pay tithe, still, as members of that class they benefit collectively from its payment. Has not history recently furnished the ironical spectacle of J. Maynard Keynes, " advanced " Liberal economist, in his capacity of bursar of King's College, Cambridge, distraining for tithe by attempting to seize 17 acres of land in the much-reported case of Mrs. Waspe ?

Sooner or later Mrs. Waspe and her fellow-sufferers will discover that the ruling class will rally in force to the aid of the titheowners. The procedure for recovery of tithe will be tightened. The small farmers will have to look for allies in the towns from the working class. The workers, on their part, can at the same time already learn many revolutionary lessons from the struggle.

To the tithe resisters of to-day the words of Engels, written in 1870, are thoroughly applicable :

> There is another group of peasants who own a small piece of land. In most cases they are so burdened with mortgages that their dependence

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> on the usurer is equal to the dependence of the tenant upon the landlord. What they earn is practically a meagre wage, which, since good and bad crops alternate, is highly uncertain. These people cannot have the least hope of getting anything out of the bourgeoisie, because it is the bourgeoisie, the capitalist usurers, that squeeze the life-blood out of them. Still, the peasants cling to their property, though in reality it does not belong to them but to the usurers. It will be necessary to make it clear to these people that only when a government of the people will have transformed all mortgages into a debt to the State, and thereby lowered the rent, will they be able to free themselves from the usurer. This, however, can only be accomplished by the working class. (Preface to the 2nd Edition of *The Peasant War in Germany*, p. 19).

Only in alliance with the revolutionary working class, the gravediggers of the capitalist order, can the small farmers hope to free themselves, not only from the burden of tithe, but from all the other oppressive fixed charges which are now dragging them to utter ruin. Not till this class wins to power will the death-knell of Queen Anne's Bounty be sounded from the belfries.

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THE GOLD RUSH IN KENYA

By J. KENYATTA
(*General Secretary, Kikuyu Central Association*)

THE discovery of gold in Kenya has led to new robbery of land from the Africans. African villages and crops have been razed to the ground to make room for the gang of gold-diggers. This act of terror has filled the Africans with bitterness and resentment.

In the last 35 years the British imperialists have robbed all the best lands from the African natives of Kenya. The pastoral and agricultural Africans, entirely dependent on their land as the basis of their entire life, have largely found themselves landless. Uncompensated appropriation of native lands has rendered thousands of the Africans homeless, and often, where once they cultivated the soil or herded their cattle on land immemorially associated with the life of their family, they now find themselves serfs forced to work on their own lands for the benefit of the white " owners " and even in some circumstances to work without pay or food.

The soul of the African is stricken nigh to death by confiscation of its ancestral lands, the obstruction of its free development in social and economic matters, and its subjugation to an imperialist system of slavery, taxpaying, pass-carrying and forced labour. This policy of British imperialist robbery and oppression aroused the greatest alarm and anxiety amongst the Kenya Africans, the outcome of which was the revolt in 1922, when defenceless Africans—men, women and children—were shot down by these filibusters.

In order to undermine the minds of the African masses by hypocritical phrases, an ordinance was passed (*i.e.*, the Kenya Native Lands Trust Ordinance of 1930), followed by a Memorandum on Native Policy, in which documents we find *inter alia* :—

> Primarily Kenya is an African territory and His Majesty's Government think it necessary definitely to record their considered opinion that the interests of the African natives must be paramount, and that if, and when, those interests of the Africans and the interests of the immigrant races should conflict, the former should prevail.

This sounds well and good on paper, but when it comes to real practice, no doubt it is the interest of the immigrant races (white imperialists) which " prevails." If we look into this matter properly we see that the railways and main roads which are built with money forcibly derived from the Africans, are serving the interests of the white imperialists.

This document went on with the same imperialist lies as follows:

> The first essential is to remove finally from the native mind any feeling of insecurity in regard to his tribal lands—that the lands within

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> the boundaries as finally gazetted for Native Reserves are reserved for the use and benefit of the natives for ever. Any derogation from this solemn pledge would, in the view of His Majesty's Government, be not only a flagrant breach of trust, but also, in view of the inevitable effect upon the natives, a serious calamity from which the whole Colony would not fail to suffer.

This " Magna Charta " goes on to explain the rare cases where an exception must be made. It will be necessary to expropriate plots of native land. " . . . . for new purposes of public utility " such as it enumerated—schools, hospitals, post offices, water or electricity works, roads or railways. But it said :—

> It is of high importance that no such compulsory expropriation, however small in extent, of land once definitely allocated to Native occupancy or use, should ever be permitted for the mere private or personal profit or other advantage of any individual.

It was further stated that if land is taken for public purposes other land equivalent in superficial extent, and also, as far as possible, equal in agricultural quality, convenience and market value to that taken away, plus an addition as compensation for disturbance, must be given. In order to cover the cost of reinstatement in new homes, the Government must also meet the cost of removal. But before such an action is taken the natives concerned had to be given ample notice ; and finally, the assent of the Native Councils must be secured.

That was the law of Kenya and a " solemn pledge " till gold was discovered on one of the Kavirondo Reserves. In the presence of that glittering metal the British imperialists could not face their so-called " word of honour."

An Amendment Bill was rushed through the Legislative Council of Kenya, and in a short time it was sanctioned by the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Cunliffe-Lister, who professes to have " the interest of the natives at heart." His action allowed the Kenya Government to amend the Native Land Trust Ordinance, and the taking away of native land and leasing it without any obligation to the natives concerned, to provide equivalent land. The restriction to " public purposes " is no more recognised, and lest the Native Local Councils should object to this contemptuous robbery, their consent is dispensed with. It is not considered necessary to bring a proposed " temporary " exclusion to the notice of the Local Native Council or the natives concerned.

Cunliffe-Lister, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, admitted this glaring robbery and lies of the British imperialists. In the House of Commons dealing with the amendment, he said : " Land may be temporarily excluded from a reserve for mining leases and that compensation for such temporary exclusion may be paid in money instead of in the form of additional land." This money is even not to be paid to the natives disturbed, but to some Native Trust Fund, which is in the hands

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and controlled by these same imperialists. And even if the money were paid to the natives concerned, what could they do with it while the law of Kenya does not allow natives to buy land outside the Reserve? What low cunning and dirty trickery! Let those cajolers understand that the Africans are conscious of what is taking place, and it is their (African) "sacred" duty to fight hard against the imperialist oppressors.

The Secretary of State went on to affirm that :—

> The provisions of the Bill have been agreed to by the Morris Carter Commission.

This Commission was appointed in response to the recommendation of the 1931 Joint Committee of Lords and Commons on East Africa.

The Joint Committee, after hearing the evidence of the African witnesses, who were brought all the way from Africa to England for this purpose, recommended :—

> In view of the nervousness among the native population as regards the land question, a full and authoritative inquiry should be undertaken immediately into the needs of the native population, present and prospective, with respect to land within or without the reserve, held either on tribal or on individual tenure. Pending the conclusion of this inquiry no further alienation of Crown land to non-natives should take place.

The time has now come when the Kenya Africans will not be lured by such empty phrases, and appointment of commissions of "investigation." The above commission, instead of hearing the claims of Africans concerning lands which were robbed from them, went to spy how the British imperialists could steal more lands, and how best they could exploit and oppress the natives of Kenya.

Cunliffe-Lister, speaking in the House of Commons with regard to this expropriation of native land, said: "Nobody is going to benefit more than the natives." What are these benefits? Since the gold-diggers entered into the Kavirondo Reserve they have undoubtedly carried out wholesale looting. They have taken away the native land which the Government declared sacred and inviolable. They are turning young African girls and women into prostitutes in order to satisfy their sensual bestial lust, they are dragging their "honour" in the mud and slush, their civilisation is all in the interest of capitalist greed and imperialist exploitation. African villages have been overrun, their crops have been rooted out without compensation, the villagers have been brutally treated by the gold-diggers. This inhuman treatment is what the honourable gentleman calls "Benefit."

At present there are over 1,000 European prospectors in the country and many others are on their way there. The presence of these gold hunters in the Kavirondo country is regarded with the utmost hostility by the native inhabitants, who, less than two years ago were told that

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their land had been reserved for their use for " ever," which they innocently believed, therefore, to be free from any alien settlement. But now they suddenly find it overrun by increasing numbers of European gold hunters who are gathering like flies round a honey pot in the hope of satisfying their greed at the expense of the natives of Kakamega. Already an area of over 400 square miles is in the hands of the prospectors, they have started damming and diverting the streams for the purpose of alluvial gold washing, and have taken to digging huge pits and trenches all over the place among the native villages and the cultivated fields. They have pegged the whole countryside for their future operations. The area so taken is most densely populated and closely cultivated by the natives. This shows that thousands of them will be homeless and landless. The Government stated that this expropriation of land will be only " temporary," and that is why compensation in land was not necessary. This is just a lie pure and simple because millions of acres of the best lands were formerly taken from the Africans in this way of " temporary occupation," and never came back. It is quite clear that what the British imperialists want is to create a landless class of Africans so that they can enslave them in the gold mines and herd them in the compounds just as they are doing in the South African goldfields.

In addition to the area mentioned above, there is an additional area of 5,900 square miles which might be taken at any time for the benefit of a few individuals who are going out to Kakamega for their selfish gains. What Africans are asking is where is the " solemn pledge ? " Where is the " sacred trust ? "

It is clear now that the " promises " which have been regarded as " sacred " have already been broken. Every Kenya African should understand that these promises are nothing but a dupe to keep us sleeping while the imperialists are planning for further robberies and exploitation in order to satisfy their own ends. It will be remembered that the policy of imperialists is to " divide and rule " ; thus they have been able to rob and oppress us separately. Let us unite and demand our birthrights.

The eviction of the Masai by the British imperialists in 1904 from their best land of Laikipia to the barren land to the south of the Uganda Railway is still in the memory of many Kenyans. This unforgivable act of violent robbery was aided by some of our countrymen unconsciously, while they were thinking that they were fulfilling their duty to their " King and Country," but to-day, no doubt, many have realised what this means. Because from that time on many tribes have been treated in the same manner. Take for instance the Kikuyu, Kavirondo Nandi, Wakamba and many other coastal tribes, they have lost their best lands through the same brutal expropriation. Recently, while we (Kenya Africans) have been hanging on to these unworthy promises and petitioning

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to the King and his Parliament, lands have been taken away from Swahilis at Kisauni (Free Town); their homes were rooted out in 1931 in order that the imperialists might have fine building ground round the coast at the expense of the Africans. The Kikuyu in 1930-31 lost hundreds of acres of valuable land for cultivation, grazing and many water falls. Their huts were razed to the ground by the order of the Government to give room for a private Electric Power Station for the benefit of the white settlers. To-day in 1933 gold having been found in Kavirondoland at Kakamega, they have to be evicted so that the coffers of the British imperialists may be filled. I cite these instances in order to show that petitions and appeals to the King and his Parliament will cut no ice.

Perhaps many will ask: "What can we do against an imperialist government which is armed with machine guns, aeroplanes and bombs, &c.?" My answer to that is, we have learnt examples from other countries. And the only way out is the mass organisation of workers and peasants of various tribes, and by having this unity we shall be in a position to put up a strong protest against this robbery and exploitation.

It is no secret that the money we pay by way of direct and indirect taxation is used to oppress and exploit us. Therefore the more we refuse to pay this contribution the weaker the oppression machine will be. And also by agreeing to work on these lands under slavish conditions we are helping our enemy to draw huge profits out of our sweat and blood by which they are able to carry on further robberies.

Therefore, all Kenya Africans must fight for their liberation. We cannot forget how we have been exploited and oppressed through these "solemn pledges." Let none of our countrymen have any faith in these imperialist hypocritical "promises" which mean nothing but the oppression and exploitation of the masses. In this fight we shall have the support of all who are oppressed by the British Slave Empire—the Indians, the Irish, the South Africans—all these people are revolting against this damnable Empire whose days are numbered.

With the support of all revolutionary workers and peasants we must redouble our efforts to break the bonds that bind us. We must refuse to give any support to the British imperialists either by paying taxes or obeying any of their slave laws! We can fight in unity with the workers and toilers of the whole world, and for a Free Africa.

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A DECADE OF CHINA—1922-1932

From Russell to Tawney[1]

By G. L. PU

IN 1922 Bertrand Russell, after a year's residence in China, spent partly in teaching, published his "Problem of China." Russell enjoyed an international reputation as a scholar and a radical, and therefore his book was a big event for Chinese nationalists all over the world. In this book Mr. Russell took up a critical attitude to Western civilisation and the behaviour of foreigners in China, while extolling the excellence of the old Chinese culture. He made a number of sallies upon foreign domination in China, saying, for instance, that:

> Such industrial development as already exists is mainly in the hands of foreigners and its profits provide warships for the Japanese or mansions and dinners for British and American millionaires. (p. 248.)
>
> The definition of the word "good" is difficult, but the definition of "good government" is as easy as A.B.C.: it is government that yields fat dividends to capitalists. (p. 166.)

In a pre-capitalist and predominantly agricultural country the main problem, as every serious student of history, whether Marxist or bourgeois, knows, is the agrarian problem. Let us see what Russell has to say about it to the eager Chinese students who came in hundreds to his lectures. With great assurance and a beautiful simplicity he declared that: "Most of the land is in the hands of peasant proprietors." (p. 12.)

This statement is so flagrantly untrue and misleading that it renders the whole book worthless. Russell cannot explain away his mistake by saying that this was the prevailing impression at the time. According to the official statistics of the Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce for 1917, 28 per cent. of all the peasants were tenants and 22 per cent. part-tenants. As early as 1888 an agrarian inquiry was made by the North China Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, the published results of which covered 120 pages and were entitled "Tenure of Land in China." All reputable writers on China—from Duhalde, who wrote at the beginning of the 18th century, to Davies—and all travellers' accounts and customs returns were explicit as to the importance of the agrarian problem in China. It is only the most ignorant and backward of the European-educated Chinese, who can write, as L. K. Tao did in his book, "Village and Town Life in China," that: "on the whole property is pretty evenly distributed." (p. 41.)

[1] Bertrand Russell, F.R.S. *The Problem of China*. London, 1922. R. H. Tawney. *Land and Labour in China*. London, 1932.

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This essential fact—the failure to grasp the fundamental problem of Chinese society as it confronted him—accounts for the flippant, irresponsible way of treating all the other problems. The outcome of Mr. Russell's ponderings on Chinese history is as follows: "Chinese history consists of a series of dynasties, each strong at first and weak afterwards, each gradually losing control over subordinates, each followed by a period of anarchy (sometimes lasting for centuries) and ultimately succeeded by a new dynasty which temporarily re-establishes a strong Central Government." (p. 23.)

This is not history, or if it is, it is so meaningless that it could be taught in any of the larger public schools.

He visualises in future: " . . . The spread of Christianity, the substitution of the American civilisation for the Chinese; the destruction of traditional beauty, except for such *objets d'art* as millionaires may think it worth while to buy; the gradual awakening of China to her exploitation by the foreigner; and one day, fifty or a hundred years hence, the massacre of every white man throughout the Celestial Empire at a signal from some vast secret society." (p. 166.)

It is not only his airiness but his contradictoriness that takes one's breath away. He knew, for instance, that a great majority of the Chinese are living on the verge of starvation: "When I arrived in China in the autumn of 1920 a large area in the North, owing to drought, was afflicted with a terrible famine." (p. 72.) He knew also that this state of affairs was more or less chronic: "When the rainfall is less than usual, immense numbers perish of starvation." (p. 73.)

Yet at the same time he feels no hesitation in saying: "By valuing progress and efficiency, we have secured power and wealth; by ignoring them, the Chinese, until we brought disturbance, secured on the whole a peaceable existence and a life full of enjoyment." (p. 13.) Who are these Chinese who have secured a life "full of enjoyment?" Are they by any chance those who have been driven by starvation to depart from this life? And again: "I am inclined to think that the inhabitants of China at the present moment are happier on the average than the inhabitants of Europe taken as a whole." (p. 70.)

It is perfectly clear that Mr. Russell is unwittingly speaking of two Chinas, one—the happier China of the bourgeoisie, and—what Mr. Russell may not have suspected—of the landowners who live on rack-rents and who entertained him and paid for his comforts and his teaching, and another China—the nameless, hungry, miserable China of the peasants and coolies, which was of no use or interest to him. In fairness to Mr. Russell it must be said that he was perfectly open about his indifference to the economic condition of the Chinese masses.

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> For my part, I think the cultural questions are the most important, both for China and for mankind; if these could be solved, I would accept *any political or economic system* which ministered to that end. (10.)

It is then small wonder that he came to justify militarism, corruption, anarchy. "The corruption and anarchy in Chinese politics do much less harm than one would be inclined to expect." (p. 203.) Or still worse: "In such a country militarism is not the scourge it is with us, and the difference is due to the Confucian ethics." (p. 43.)

Then there are perfectly Philistine bits like: "The Chinese nation is the most patient in the world; it thinks of centuries as other nations think of decades. It is essentially indestructible and can afford to wait." (p. 16.)

Mr. Russell has not even the excuse that his book was published a long time ago—1922—and that it is, naturally, out-of-date. It was republished, with a postscript of several pages, in 1926, when the Chinese Revolution was already in full swing. He said at that time that "nothing decisive has happened in China."

II.

The ten years that have passed since Russell's visit to China were in some respects the most eventful years in China's history. The penetration of capitalist relations into the villages, the growth of industries, the progressing ruin of the peasantry and petty bourgeoisie, and the development of the working-class were all proceeding rapidly. A strike movement on an unprecedented scale startled the world in 1922, when a hundred thousand coolies abandoned Hong-Kong and left it a dead city. A tremendous peasant movement arose first in Kuangtung, and spread to other parts of China. By 1925 the movement of workers, peasants, intelligentsia and that section of the bourgeoisie with nationalist sympathies culminated in the Chinese Revolution. As soon as the Revolution gained strength and depth the alarmed bourgeoisie betrayed it and joined forces with foreign imperialism. Still, in the main provinces the great agrarian Revolution went on culminating in 1930-32 in the creation of large Soviet Republics in Southern and Central China, with a population of nearly 80 million. Then the essentially agrarian character of the Chinese Revolution became obvious even to those who had never suspected its real nature. It was manifest in official documents, in proclamations, in the policy of the Revolutionary Government, in the burning of title-deeds, in reprisals by the landowners. It also became clear that the peasants were at one with the Chinese working-class who naturally assumed the leading rôle.

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Just at this time—1931-32—Professor Tawney, a Fabian Socialist, came to China as a sociologist of international repute to study conditions on the spot and to advise and report on prospects and policies to the Chinese Government and to bourgeois public opinion. A great gulf separates Tawney from Russell. What a muddled amateur and a self-styled sociologist entirely missed could not but be perfectly clear to Tawney, a student of agrarian problems. He states the facts simply and bluntly :

> Not less than thirty million farmers are not owners, but tenants. (p. 64.) These thirty million tenant farmers represent half of China's peasant population. Rents are said to absorb approximately 50 per cent. of the produce in parts of Hupeh, 55 per cent. in parts of Kiangsu, between 50 and 60 per cent. in parts of Hunan, and 55 to 66 per cent. on small farms in Kwangtung. (p. 66.)

So the tenant farmer who is struggling to eke out an existence on his tiny plot of land has to pay from a half to two-thirds of the produce of his labour to the parasitic landowner. Nor is this all. To this must be added the general prevalence of feudal conditions, under which the tenants are : " In some cases, it appears, actually required by their tenure to perform labour-services for their landlords, and, when tension is acute, are terrorised by the latter by the use of armed force." (p. 65.)

Then there is usury. The ruined peasant, tenant or no-tenant, who has neither seed, cattle or forage, becomes, as in India, the prey of the moneylender. He requires money and :

> Unless exceptionally fortunate, he requires it every year and, in a considerable number of cases, throughout the year. He gets it where he can, when he can, on what terms he can. Since his necessities are desperate, he is often skinned alive. (p. 60.) (And further) : The principal rural moneylenders are landowners, merchants and dealers, and, though to a less extent, pawnshops. (p. 60.) (Or) : the heaviest millstone round the neck of the Chinese farmer is usury. (p. 95.)

That the agrarian question is *real* is no secret to Tawney :

> To ascribe the bitter agrarian struggles which have occurred in parts of the country merely to the effects of propaganda is naïve in the extreme. (p. 97.) No reference to Communist propaganda is required to explain the no-rent campaigns and peasants' revolts which have taken place in parts of the country. It is surprising, indeed, that they have not been more frequent. (p. 69.)

The appalling state in which the Chinese peasantry, taken as a whole finds itself as a result of excessive taxation and rents, is graphically described by Tawney in the following paragraph on page 73 :

> It is taxed by one ruffian who calls himself a general, by another, by a third, and when it has bought them off, still owes taxes to the Government ; in some cases actually more than twenty years' taxation has been paid in advance. It is squeezed by dishonest officials. It must cut its crops at the point of the bayonet, and hand them over without payment to the local garrison, though it will starve without them. It

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is forced to grow opium in defiance of the law, because its military tyrants can squeeze heavier taxation from opium than from rice or wheat, and make money, in addition, out of the dens where it is smoked. It pays blackmail to the professional bandits in its neighbourhood ; or it resists, and, a year later, when the bandits have assumed uniform, sees its villages burned to the ground.

III.

The general conclusions seem perfectly obvious. The only way to rescue the peasants of China from famine, death and misery, is to put an end to the present feudal relationships on the land and the exploitation of the peasant by the landowner, usurer, merchant and militarist. Since the landlords and usurers are never likely to make concessions and agree to the confiscation of the land, the only solution is the agrarian revolution that is taking place in China now. But to appraise the problem is one thing and to suggest a solution is another.

It is when he begins to suggest solutions that Professor Tawney appears in his true light. He begins very cautiously and from afar. His first and main task is to isolate carefully the two movements—the workers' and the peasants'—and show that they do not represent one great stream of effort of the toilers of China towards liberation and the creation of their own fatherland, but two separate streams.

With this end in view he thinks it necessary to minimise the process of the industrialisation of China and the position occupied by the working-class. The great industrial cities on China's sea coast are, according to Tawney, no more than : " A modern fringe stitched along the brim of an ancient garment." (p. 13.) He carefully warns the reader that industrial China counts for nothing : " The embroidery must not be mistaken for the fabric, or the door for the house." (p. 14.) Or still plainer : " It is evident that an industrial civilisation of the Western type is in its infancy in China." (p. 128.)

This is obviously untrue of a land where, as Professor Tawney himself states on p. 128—the industrial proletariat numbers between 1.5 and 2.5 million and, including non-factory workers, nearly 10 million, or where, the mills consume a quantity of cotton nearly as great as those in Lancashire. Shanghai, as is well known, has been for many years one of the five greatest ports of the world and one of its largest textile centres. Still, Tawney thinks it imperative to warn his readers against " the optical delusion produced by Shanghai, which to-day at least, is a gate into China, not China herself." (p. 15.)

Now, although it may be unpleasant to say so, this is pure bluff. Shanghai has a population of nearly three million, nearly two-thirds of which is composed of workers and over a quarter of a million of factory

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hands. To say that Shanghai is an "optical delusion" is as preposterous as to say that London or Manchester are mere excrescences on the body of England.

Along with this, there is the desire to minimise the part played by the Chinese workers: "not the wage-worker, but the peasant, is the representative figure in China to-day." (p. 51.)

This depends upon what one means by a representative. In numbers, of course, the peasants are greatly superior. But two million Chinese factory workers centralised in large industrial undertakings, class-conscious, schooled in strikes and political struggles (excluding for the moment the millions of handicraft workers and coolies), who have given proof of their maturity in a series of strikes and uprisings and by their struggle for power under communist leadership, are actually much more representative of China than Professor Tawney and his friends would like them to be.

The second deliberate attempt at misrepresentation that Professor Tawney indulges in is that of minimising the part played by foreign imperialism in China. With astonishing airiness he declares that: "modern industry in China . . . . to a considerable *though diminishing* degree, is under foreign management." (p. 17.)

This statement is in direct contradiction to facts. If we take the last 20 years we shall see that all the important iron-ore mines and iron and steel undertakings have passed into foreign, mainly Japanese, hands. The large coal mines remain, as they were, in the hands of the British and the Japanese, and since the production of these mines increases and that of the Chinese-owned mines does not, the foreign share in the output of coal becomes greater and not smaller. As to textile industries, while the Japanese officially control more than 50 per cent. of the cotton spindles, no reference to this industry would be correct which did not take into account the unofficial financial control that Japanese interests exercise over many Chinese mills. The diminution of foreign control may serve excellently as a bedtime story for the somnolent Chinese bourgeois intelligentsia, but it is certainly not founded on fact.

Again, while making an indignant attack on the practice of child-labour in Shanghai, he deliberately overlooks the fact that the foreign millowners in Shanghai are still sabotaging, through their Shanghai Municipal Council, the recommendation for its abolition, thus making child-labour a national institution in China.

Tawney's attempt to prove that China is not industrialised, that the industries are an extraneous growth, that the working-class is of small consequence, and that imperialism does no real harm to China, is intended to distort the whole picture of China's recent history and of the true relationship of classes.

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We know that in reality, in spite of the efforts of imperialism to hinder the development of heavy industries, and to slow down the general rate of China's industrialisation, the country still has a number of important industries with a numerically important proletariat. In a semi-colonial country where foreign capital exercises a large degree of control over all industries, the Chinese working-class has far outgrown the native bourgeoisie. The working-class is the natural ally of the peasants and necessarily assumes the leadership of the peasantry in the joint struggle against feudalism.

Moreover, it is in the vanguard of the whole anti-imperialist front, because imperialism and the feudal forces of China are jointly responsible for the sub-human scale of wages and appalling conditions of work and for the exploitation of the peasantry. These, in a colonial country, are likely to continue indefinitely until an agrarian and anti-imperialist revolution puts an end to the colonial status and semi-feudal condition of China.

IV.

All this reticence on the subject of imperialism has a definite explanation. Professor Tawney though a " socialist," is not a champion of the oppressed nations of the world and his Christian sympathy with the plight of the oppressed Chinese people does not prevent him from outlining a programme in perfect harmony with the idea of perpetuating its semi-colonial status.

First of all he tries to persuade us that a colony will always remain undeveloped : " She (China) is never likely to be industrialised in the same sense as the United States, Germany or Great Britain." (p. 136.) " She is, and will long continue to be, overwhelmingly a country of peasants and handicraftsmen." (p. 145.)

These are just the sort of things that used to be said about Russia before the Revolution and even up to the beginning of the Five Year Plan. The rate of industrial development at which the Soviet Union has been progressing shows that generally speaking, the industrial prospects of a country depend upon the class in whose hands industrial development lies.

Professor Tawney, evidently convinced that there will never be a real revolution in China and therefore that she will remain a colony, decides to indulge in a bit of coquettish philistinism. " Does she (China) genuinely desire it ? (industrialism). Or is her real aim a more subtle one—to use Western technique as an instrument, while resisting domination by the mentality behind it ? Only a Chinese can say, and perhaps not even he." (p. 130.)

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To fight against foreign domination, Tawney suggests, is futile. Propaganda is useless. China must first set her house in order. " It is to that task and not to sterile, if well-founded, denunciations of Western and Japanese imperialism, that the brains and energy of Young China should be turned. Unequal treaties, extra-territoriality, concessions, the Manchurian question—these matters, if China succeeds in setting her own house in order, will settle themselves. Unless she does so they will not be settled at all." (p. 62.)

To try and recover Manchuria is, according to Tawney, unnecessary. " As far, in short, as Manchuria is concerned, China can afford to wait provided that, while waiting, she succeeds in achieving internal stability." (p. 169.)

But how is this internal stability to be achieved ? It is in answering this question that Professor Tawney finally reveals himself.

> To the laymen it appears that the most effective way of aiding China to attain both a larger measure of economic well-being and political stability would be an *international loan*, with the necessary safeguards against undue interference in her internal affairs, for the purpose of enabling her to improve her means of communication.

So that is what it all comes to ? The Fabian Socialist and friend of China recommends what Big Business all the world over has been striving for—an International Loan for the corrupt Chinese Government to squander on civil war and to perpetuate foreign concessions and railways in China. This is exactly what J. P. Morgan, the Hong-Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation and the Japanese Banks, who are financing the occupation of Manchuria and the bombardment of Shanghai, have been recommending in their advocacy of an international Banking Consortium for China. It is precisely what the last chapters of the Lytton Report suggest.

If Bertrand Russell tried to view the problem of China from the point of view of the Chinese nationalist bourgeoisie, Professor Tawney makes no secret of the fact that he looks at it from the point of view of the British bourgeoisie.

V.

What is to become of the agrarian movement, how is the land question to be solved ? Towards the end of the book the agrarian question dwindles perceptibly until Professor Tawney comes out with the following programme : " The fundamental economic needs of China have been stated in the preceding pages, and need not again be discussed. They are in order of their importance, (1) an improvement in the means of communication by the extension of roads, and, as circumstances allow, of railways ; (2) the improvement of agriculture, on the side, not only

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of productive methods, but of finance, marketing and land tenure; (3) the development, with adequate safeguards, of machine industry, and its extension beyond the small number of areas in which at present it is concentrated." (p. 182.)

So railways, built with the assistance of large international loans, come first, then improvement of agriculture, including, incidentally, land tenure, and lastly some industrial development. The latter, as Tawney explains on another page, should include the production of cotton, silk, wool, fruit, eggs, flour, oil, cement, railways, electricity and shipping. As will be noted Professor Tawney carefully excludes the key industries which make for the economic and political independence of a country, such as iron and steel production, and engineering, shipbuilding, automobile and chemical industries. In practice all these suggestions amount to perpetuating China's colonial status.

As to the solution of the agrarian problem we read that: "The simplest and most effective course, for which there are many precedents in the history of other countries, is to use public credit to make it easy for tenants to become owners, and at the same time to exercise compulsion on landlords to sell." (p. 99.)

Who is to provide "public credit" to pauper-peasants in a semi-colony which is a debtor at the mercy of the international banks? Who is to exercise "compulsion on landlords" in a semi-feudal country where landlords are largely the government?

The whole suggestion is false. No doubt Professor Tawney would welcome small concessions to tenants or reductions in rent, or the rise to prosperity of the owner-farmers, who would, in their turn, exploit their fellow-peasants, and buy more goods from the capitalist countries, but on the whole he prefers to leave intact the present semi-colonial regime in China as sponsored and preserved by international finance.

VI.

Bertrand Russell was blissfully ignorant of the existence of an agrarian problem in China. Professor Tawney, on the other hand, wants us to believe that imperialism and the semi-colonial status of China are of no consequence. The obvious connection between the twin brothers—colonial feudalism and imperialist domination proved to be beyond the understanding of the one and the intellectual honesty of the other. It is foreign imperialism that retards the progress of China, that robs, exploits and poisons her, perpetuates feudalism and blocks her road to economic development and agrarian reform, and it is the strength of feudal forces in China that makes the continuance of foreign imperialism possible.

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MARX AND ENGELS ON THE BRITISH WORKING-CLASS MOVEMENT—III.

1879—1895

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

The following extracts from Engels' letters cover the period from the end of 1885 to the middle of 1886. They deal mainly with the activities of the S.D.F. in putting up Socialist candidates financed by anti-Socialists at the general election of 1885, and with the organisation of the Trafalgar Square meeting of February 8, 1886, in opposition to the " Fair Traders."—H.C.S.

HERE, too, we are having a storm in our socialist teacup. Kautsky will already have written you something about it, and I enclose two *Echos*[1] (Liberal). One or two further papers and a document (a letter by Bland,[2] based on the minutes of the Executive of the Social Democratic Federation, which Aveling is sending you) contain the chief facts.

This time Hyndman has dealt himself his coup de grace. He has accepted money for socialist candidatures from the Tories, in order to rob the Liberals of votes. He has confessed to £340, but as the official costs of the three candidatures amounted to £600 it must really have been about a thousand pounds or more.

It may be permissible to accept money from another party in certain circumstances, and as an exception, firstly if the money is given unconditionally, and secondly, as long as more harm than good does not come of the transaction. Here the contrary was the case. First, the condition was the putting up of socialist candidates in constituencies where they could only make themselves ridiculous—which actually did happen: Williams got 27 votes out of 4,722, Fielding 32 out of 6,374; only Burns got as much as 598 votes out of 11,055 in Nottingham.[3] Second, Hyndman

[1] *Echo*, December 7, 1885, p. 2, " Socialists and the Elections, letter by C. L. Fitzgerald; also ibid, December 5, 1885, p. 2, " Socialist Candidates," letter by J. E. Williams (Candidate for Hampstead).

[2] Published in *Le Socialiste* for December 12, 1885, and also elsewhere.

[3] The S.D.F. candidates were J. Williams in Hampstead, and John Fielding in Kennington. In addition John Burns stood as a Socialist for Nottingham West, his candidature being financed by Hudson, the soap manufacturer.

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knew that the accepting of money from the Tories meant nothing else than the irretrievable moral ruination of the Socialists in the eyes of the *only* class from which they can recruit adherents—that is, the great radical working mass. It is exactly the same thing as the alliance with Stoecker against the Progressive Party once suggested in Berlin.

But Hyndman was not satisfied with this heroic deed. He already visualised himself as a second Parnell, holding the balance between the two Parties—forgetting only that he had not, like Parnell, 80 votes in Parliament and 200,000 Irish votes in the elections in England and Scotland. He obtained plenipotentiary powers from the Executive of the Federation to go to Birmingham with Champion and see Chamberlain, the head of the Radicals. With the Tory money in his pocket he offered the latter his support if he would leave a constituency in Birmingham open for him, secure him the Liberal vote, and bring in an Eight-Hour Bill. Chamberlain was not so stupid as the Tories and showed him the door.

Meanwhile the affair, which had been carried on under cover by the Executive, became known among the branches and caused a great deal of fuss. You will find further particulars in Bland's letter, which was wtitten for publication, but about which you must not say that it is based on the minutes. There is to be a General Meeting,[4] and it is questionable whether the Federation will survive it—it can hardly do so as a live organisation.

Enclosed is Hunter Watt's declaration in the *Pall Mall Gazette*.[5] It was written up with Hyndman's assistance ; yet the latter was forced to let the term " ill-advised " (referring to him) stand. On the other hand, Williams' declaration in the *Echo* is a direct disclaimer, and takes the standpoint, not unfounded in the circumstances, of absolute hostility towards all socialist middle-class men. This, then, is where Mr. Hyndman has got himself with his pushfulness. The man is a complete caricature of Lassalle—absolutely indifferent as to the quality of his methods even when they do *not* lead to the goal, as long as he himself gets something out of it ; always in need of direct successes and throwing out whales to catch sprats ; finally, always imagining himself the pivot of the world and totally unable to see facts except as they need to be to please him. In addition to all this, a political adventurer *comme il faut*. All the vices of Lassalle without a single one of his virtues. *Engels to Bernstein*, December 7, 1885.

The complete dissension among the German free-thinkers in the economic world entirely corresponds with what is happening among the

[4]The Annual General Meeting was held on January 10, 1886, and a resolution whitewashing the Executive Committee of the S.D.F. was passed.

[5]*Pall Mall Gazette*, December 4, 1885, p. 2., " The Man in the Moon, again." Letter by J. Hunter.

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English radicals. The old Manchesterites in the style of John Bright are dying out, and the new generation, exactly like the Berliners, is ready to occupy itself with social reform in the form of wages. The sole difference is that in England the bourgeoisie is tending towards "helping" not so much the industrial as the agricultural worker, who rendered it great services in the recent elections, and also that in accordance with the English custom the task must be undertaken not so much by the state as by the community. For the agricultural proletariat, a garden and a bed of potatoes; for the urban proletariat, improvement in sanitary conditions and such-like reforms—such is their programme. It is a splendid symptom of the fact that the bourgeoisie is being forced to sacrifice its own classic economic theory partly from political reasons, and partly because the practical deductions from that theory have compelled them to doubt its soundness. The growth of armchair socialism, which in one form or another, both here and in France is more and more squeezing classic economy out of the universities, also testifies to this. The actual contradictions engendered by the form of production have become so obvious that they cannot be obscured by any theory, except perhaps by armchair-socialistic eclecticism, which is not a theory but balderdash.

Six weeks ago there was talk here of signs of economic improvement. But now this talk has again died away, the need is more acute than ever before; there is no improvement even in prospect, and, in addition, the present winter is unusually severe. The eighth year of over-production is crushing the market, and instead of improving, matters are getting worse and worse. There is now no doubt that the position has changed fundamentally by comparison with formerly; since serious competitors of England have appeared in the world market the period of crises in the former sense of the word must be regarded as finished. When from being severe the crises become chronic and at the same time lose none of their intensiveness, what will be the end? When the accumulated surpluses of commodities are exhausted a new period of expansion should follow, if only for a short period; but I should be intrigued to know how it will all occur. In any case two things are beyond doubt: first, we have entered upon a period much more dangerous for the old society than that of the ten-year cycles; and secondly, the expansion, when it comes, will affect England much less than formerly, when she alone was skimming the cream from the world market. The day this is realised in England the socialist movement here will take on a serious character—only then, and not before.—*Engels to Bebel*, London, January 20, 1886.

Ask Dietzgen[6] to let you have H. Blanc on Hyndman's electoral intrigues with the Tories and simultaneously with the Liberals, if you are

[6]Dietzgen, Joseph (1828-1888), the German working-class philosopher, author of *Positive Outcome of Philosophy*, &c.

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not yet familiar with it. Everything is literally true. After this, the Social Democratic Federation, if it hangs together at all, will be morally dead. Hyndman must have been out of his mind to behave as he did. You have probably already read in *Justice* and *Commonweal*[7] about his mad attack on Aveling, together with the documents. Unfortunately, the other Federation leaders are all not worth much more than Hyndman. In general, the whole movement here is only a phantom, but if it is possible to draw into the Socialist League a kernel of people who have a good theoretical understanding, much will be gained for a genuine mass movement, which will not be long in coming.—*Engels to Sorge*, January 29, 1886.

Despite all its publicity reports the Social-Democratic Federation is a very weak organisation, in which there are good elements, but at the head of which are literary and political adventurers. Owing to its marvellous escapades during the November elections it is on the verge of destruction. Hyndman, the leader of the society, then accepted money from the Tories, and so was able to put forward Social-Democratic candidates in two London elections. As in these areas they did not even possess members of their organisation, their defeat could be foreseen (one received 27 votes out of 4,000, the other 32 out of 5,000). But as soon as Hyndman received the Tory money he grew conceited beyond all bounds and at once went to Birmingham to Chamberlain, now a Minister, to offer him his " support " (which in all England would not yield a thousand votes), provided that (Chamberlain) with the aid of the Liberals, assured him, Hyndman, a seat in Birmingham and agreed to introduce a bill for an eight-hour day. Chamberlain is not an ass, and he showed him the door. Because of this, despite all attempts to hush it up there was a scandal inside the Federation and a threat of its breaking up. Then, of course, something would have occurred which would again have moved matters forward.

Meantime unemployment was continually growing. The smash of the English monopoly in the world market had led to the crisis continuing without interruption since 1878, and it is intensifying rather than weakening. The misery, especially in the East end of London, is terrible. The unusually severe winter which set in from the beginning of January, and with it the boundless equanimity of the possessing classes caused a powerful ferment among the unemployed masses. As always, the politicians endeavoured to exploit this ferment for their own purposes. The Conservatives, just thrown out of the government, began to explain the source of the unemployment as foreign competition (and rightly), and also by foreign protective tariffs (in the majority of cases wrongly), and

[7] *Justice*, October 3, 1885, p. 1, and October 17, 1885, p. 2 ; *Commonweal*, November, 1885, pp. 99-100. Aveling had been charged with violating a speaking agreement at Dod Street, and the *Commonweal* completely exonerates him.

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came out with the slogan of " Fair Trade," *i.e.*, a militant customs tariff. A workers' organisation also exists which advocates a militant tariff policy. On February 8 it called a meeting in Trafalgar Square. Meantime the Social Democratic Federation was not slumbering; it at first organised a small demonstration, and now decided to exploit this meeting. Thus two meetings were held, one by the adherents of tariffs, around the Nelson column; the other, organised by the Social Democratic Federation, in the northern part of the Square opposite the National Gallery, where the speakers spoke from the street which is some 25 feet higher. Kautsky was there but left before the scenes began; he told me that the majority of the real workers were around the adherents of tariffs, whereas Hyndman and Co. spoke to a mixed audience which was out for fun and, in part, had already arrived in a very merry state of mind. If K, who had been living here less than a year, noticed that, the gentlemen of the Federation ought still more to have seen it. None the less, when apparently the meeting had broken down they put forward Hyndman's favourite idea. A procession of " unemployed " along Pall Mall, along which are situated the great political clubs of the aristocracy and the great bourgeoisie, the centre of political intrigues in England. The unemployed whom they succeeded in attracting and who went with them in order to hold a new meeting in Hyde Park were largely drawn from those who have no desire to work whatever: idlers, loafers, police spies and crooks. Seeing the smiling faces of the aristocrats in the windows of the clubs, they began to break the windows of the clubs and shops and to pillage the wine shops, organising a suitable consumers' society right in the street, so that Hyndman and Co. were forced at once to stop their bloodthirsty speeches in Hyde Park and to call for order. But a start had been made. During the procession, during a second little meeting and after it, the crowds of lumpenproletariat which Hyndman took for unemployed began to scour the adjacent rich streets, to plunder the jewellers' and other shops, to smash the windows with stolen loaves and sheeps' trotters, and then dispersed, having met with no opposition whatever. Only part of them were scattered in Oxford Street by four—yes, by four—policemen.

The police were not to be seen anywhere else, and this was so obvious that we were not the only ones compelled to presume a definite intention. The heads of the police, evidently composed of Conservatives, were not unwilling to allow a small scandal under a Liberal government. But the government at once set up a committee of investigation, and some of these gentlemen may pay for it with their office.[8]—*Engels to Bebel*, February 15, 1886.

[8]The Home Secretary, Hugh Childers, reported on February 22, 1886, that he had decided as the result of the committee's investigations and recommendation, to set up at once an inquiry into the administration and organisation of the Metroplitan Police Force with the view of making such changes in the organisation and administration of the force in all its branches as might be necessary to remedy any defects, especially those pointed out by the committee.

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As for Hyndman, his conduct in Trafalgar Square and in Hyde Park on February 8 did far more harm than good. The rubbishy revolutionary bawling which in France, having outlived its time, attracts little attention and does no harm in England in view of the complete unpreparedness of the masses, is the purest stupidity and only frightens the proletariat; it incites only the lumpen-proletariat elements and simply cannot be accepted here otherwise than as a call to looting—such a call was indeed issued, and this has discredited Socialism in the eyes of the workers for a long time. As for the argument that social opinion was thus attracted to Socialism, you cannot know to what an extent the age-old freedom of the press and religion and the publicity connected with it has blunted the susceptibilities of the public to this kind of method. It is true that the bourgeoisie's first terror was very amusing and led to some £40,000 being subscribed for the unemployed—in the aggregate some £70,000—but all this money is already distributed, no one wants to pay any more, and the need remains the same. One thing has been achieved—the public identifies socialism with looting, and if there is no great harm in that in any case it is no gain to us. If you think that Hyndman displayed great courage that may appear so only at first glance. In reality, as Morris and others informed me, H. is a coward, and at decisive moments behaves like a coward. That does not prevent him when he finds himself in a dangerous situation deafening his cowardice with his own shouts and bawling bloodthirsty nonsense with all the power of his throat. But because of this he is especially dangerous to his fellow champions, neither they nor he ever know beforehand what he will do. Fortunately the whole story is already half forgotten here.—*Engels to Bebel*, March 18, 1886.

The movement is in no better state here. Hyndman and Co. are political careerists who ruin everything, and in the Socialist League the anarchists are making rapid progress. Morris and Bax—the former a Socialist by sentiment, and the latter hunting for philosophical paradoxes—are just now wholly in the hands of the anarchists and must experience this in *corpore vili*.[9] You will learn from the next number of *Commonweal* that, owing to Tussy's energy, Aveling no longer[10] bears responsibility for this swindle. And a good thing too. And these muddle-headed people want to lead the English working class. Fortunately, the working class does not want to have anything to do with them. *Engels to Sorge*, April 29, 1886.

Of the so-called "Movement," here I cannot communicate anything good. Hyndman gets more played out every day, he has lost all the trust

[9] *i.e.*, In their persons.

[10] A note in the *Commonweal* for May 1, 1886, announced that in consequence of the issue of the *Commonweal* as a weekly Aveling had to resign editorship owing to the increased duties entailed.

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of his own adherents, but the League[11] is more and more passing into the hands of the anarchists. Since *Commonweal* began to be issued weekly (for which it has neither the money nor the strength), Aveling has had to give up the editorship (voluntarily) to Bax, and the latter and Morris are strongly under the influence of the anarchists. These men must pass through this in *corpore vili ;* they will get out of it somehow, but it is certainly fortunate that these children's ailments are passing, before the masses come into the movement. But so far they are obstinately refusing to come in. The same thing is occurring here as in France. You will not bring the numerous working class as a whole into the movement by sermons ; but if the conditions have matured only a light jostle is needed for the entire avalanche to move. And this jostle will be given here also, and soon at that. It is highly probable that the financial crash of the great trade unions, which is occurring as a result of chronic over-production, will serve as the beginning of the new stage, when it will become clear to the English that they cannot depend on " self-help " and radicalism.—*Engels to Liebknecht*, May 12, 1886.

[11] *i.e.*, The Socialist League.

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The World of Labour

GREAT BRITAIN

Documents on the United Front[1]

IN the July issue of the LABOUR MONTHLY certain documents were published illustrating the nature of the campaign for the United Front, particularly in Great Britain. These consisted of (*a*) the Appeal of the Labour and Socialist International, dated February 19; (*b*) a summary of the Manifesto of the Executive Committee of the Communist International issued in March (previously reprinted in the April issue of the LABOUR MONTHLY, pp. 267-69); (*c*) the Appeal of the Seven Left Socialist Parties, issued early in February; (*d*) the follow-through of the E.C.C.I's appeal as put forward for Britain by the Communist Party of Great Britain; and, finally (*e*) the document rejecting this Appeal of the C.P.G.B. in the form of a letter from the National Joint Council of the E.C. of the Labour Party and the General Council of the Trades Union Congress, published on March 25.

As was pointed out in this documentation, while this Appeal of the C.P.G.B. was thus rejected by the Labour bodies, it was welcomed by the I.L.P., who agreed to enter upon negotiations with the C.P. to give effect to it.

Meanwhile the Central Committee of the C.P. had issued a reply to the Labour Party and T.U.C General Council's rejection which statement was published in the *Daily Worker* (March 27). It opened as follows:—

> "'British Labour,' says the statement, 'stands firm for the democratic rights of the people.' But what is to be done now in order to safeguard these rights and to beat back the growing capitalist offensive on working-class standards? The Labour leaders refuse to answer this question; they reject the united front and repeat phrases about rallying forces for the peaceful path to Socialism.
>
> "The Labour Party has decided to 'reaffirm its faith in Democracy and Socialism,' but this reaffirmation will not put an ounce of food in the homes of the unemployed."

After describing the situation in Britain as needing "united working-class action" it then referred to the fact that: "Fascism in Germany is trying to down the working-class movement in blood; the capitalists in Britain, armed with the terrible Means Test and taking new heart from the triumph of reaction abroad, are preparing a new starvation attack on a vast scale; war rages in the Far East and threatens to engulf the world.

"That is why the Communist International and the Communist Party of Great Britain took the new step of directly approaching the labour organisations with the object of helping to bring about the strengthening of the working-class forces which the situation demands.

"But the leaders of these organisations have answered with a point-blank refusal. They are sabotaging the united front and trying to hold back the

[1]The correspondence between the I.L.P. and the Communist International and the further developments on the international field have been excluded from this documentation.

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rank-and-file. . . . Against dictators, Fascist or Communist, cry the Labour leaders. The dictatorship of the proletariat in the Soviet Union is deliberately lumped together with the open Fascist dictatorship of the capitalist class in Germany and Italy."

The reply then proceeds to state that " The labour leaders resort to this trick in order to cover up the results of their own policy, the policy of class collaboration which inevitably leads to the advance of reaction. . . . It has been this policy of agreements with the capitalist class or sections of the capitalist camp in place of independent class struggle which has split the forces of the working-class in all countries and enabled Fascism to advance."

In conclusion the reply in the name of the Communist Party :—

> . . . Calls on the rank and file of the trade union and Labour movement energetically to protest against the attitude of their leaders and to take steps themselves to unite around common fighting demands, mobilising their forces to secure the full support of the local Labour Parties and trade union branches for building up the united front in action, and to set up committees of action in the factories, the trade unions and at the Labour Exchanges.

As previously stated, the united front appeal of the Communist Party of Great Britain issued on March 11 was only responded to by the I.L.P.

The letter in reply from the General Secretary of the I.L.P. (*New Leader*, March 17) emphasised that " the increasing danger of war, which even the capitalist press can no longer ignore, makes it all the more urgent that every effort should be made with complete sincerity by all the parties to reach agreement for effective joint action." Brockway, in the *New Leader* of the same date, emphasised that : " The need (for a united front) is so great that every section of the working class must stop thinking of its separate interests and think only of the interests of the working class as a whole." In an editorial (*New Leader*, March 24), Brockway stated : " But recognising these differences (in outlook and method between the C.P. and I.L.P.) it is proposed, in view of the crisis which faces the working class, that we should seek the maximum basis of common action to meet the danger of war, the menace of Fascism, and the cruelty of the Capitalist offensive."

The first joint meeting between the C.P. and I.L.P. was held on March 24. It was there decided, " in view of the urgency of the crisis in Germany and Austria and the danger of war," to proceed with the organisation of united mass demonstrations on April 2, and " to follow this by sustained propaganda for united working-class action on these issues." It was agreed to call upon the rank-and-file of the Labour Party, the trade union movement and the Co-operative movement strongly to support the united front campaign . . . and to demand that the Executive Committees of all working-class organisations participate immediately in the united action."

It was decided to refer to a further meeting of the Executives of the I.L.P. and C.P. for " immediate decision " the necessity of bringing about further united action on (*a*) Resistance to Fascism ; (*b*) Resistance to War ; and (*c*) Resistance to the Capitalist offensive.

On the same day that this agreement was announced in the *Daily Worker* (March 25) details of a similar agreement between the London Districts of the C.P. and I.L.P. were given. At the meeting which came to this agreement it was decided in addition : (*a*) to send a deputation to the German Embassy demanding full freedom for the German workers' press and meetings, the right to strike and freedom for the trade unions and working-class political

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parties and the release of all political prisoners; (*b*) to support the sending of a London delegation of workers to attend the International Anti-Fascist Congress in Paris; (*c*) to invite representatives of the Berlin workers to speak at London meetings and to give hospitality, &c., to German refugees; (*d*) to support the British Anti-War Movement by the setting up of local anti-war committees, &c.: (*e*) to give full support to the London N.U.W.M. demonstration to the Central Public Assistance Authority on April 25; and (*f*) to issue a joint call for a demonstration on May 1.

After endorsing "by a large majority" (according to the *New Leader* of April 21) the action of the National Council of the I.L.P. in regard to the united front with the C.P., the Annual Conference of the I.L.P. at Derby instructed the Council to continue negotiations with the C.P. on the following basis:—

> The immediate objective is united action by all sections of the working class to resist war, fascism, a break with Russia and capitalist attacks. The co-operating parties will refrain from inter-sectional attacks in the united action campaign while retaining the right to carry on their own propaganda and activities. With regard to the use of strikes in the suggested united front programme of the C.P., the I.L.P. suggest, "they should not be advocated indiscriminately, but only when there is a prospect of such action being effective. . . ." The I.L.P., however, pledged its members to be "active in their respective industries to arouse determination among the workers to resist wage-cuts and worsening conditions and to secure industrial action by the workers for this purpose, either through (*a*) the existing trade union machinery, or (*b*) rank-and-file movements within the trade unions, or (*c*) the organisation of the workers on an all-in basis." Lastly, with regard to demonstrations, these "should not be carried to the extent that familiarity with them destroys their effect"; moreover, they should not be used "needlessly to expose the demonstrators to police attack."

This statement, together with another statement drafted by the C.P. were submitted to a further joint meeting of the N.A.C., of the I.L.P. and the C.C. of the C.P. on May 5.

The C.P. statement, presented to this meeting, in its concluding paragraphs, stated that:—

> The Communist Party delegation records the view that to achieve these objectives it is necessary to resort to every phase of working-class organisation and methods of struggle, such as meetings, conferences, demonstrations, the aim of all these being to prepare the workers for strike action.
>
> Recognising the decisive part that well-organised mass demonstrations and strikes play in enabling the workers to fight for their demands, the Communist delegation declares that the carrying out of mass demonstrations and strikes is the objective of the whole united front campaign.

In the joint statement issued after the discussion between the two bodies it was revealed that "there were differences of opinion on both statements before the meeting," but that "final agreement" was reached on the following basis:—

> "The object of the united front campaign is the struggle against Fascism, war, a break with the Soviet Union and to build up resistance against the attack on the conditions of the employed and unemployed workers." Five chief issues were detailed as follows in the struggle against the capitalist offensive: (1) Resistance to wage-cuts; (2) Abolition of the Means Test and the provision of full maintenance for the unemployed; (3) Rent control at pre-war rates and the provision of working-class houses at rents within the reach of the working class; (4) The 40-hour working week without wage reductions, and support for other shorter hours movements such as the seven-hour day for the miners; (5) Freedom of speech and organisation and the release of all political prisoners in Britain and within the British Empire.

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In conclusion the statement recorded the following views and gave the following lead to action :—

> Recognising that one of the first aims of the united front campaign is to secure various forms of effective mass action—meetings, conferences, demonstrations and strikes—the I.L.P. and Communist Party call upon their members to pay special attention to the factories, trade unions and Labour Exchanges, and to carry out a wide and properly prepared campaign on the urgency of the present situation and the need for united action.
>
> The co-operation at present taking place between the I.L.P. and Communist Party nationally, in the districts and localities, is but the first stage in the development of united front activities and organisation.
>
> This must be extended in order to bring into co-operation all other working-class bodies, *i.e.*, local Labour Parties, trade union branches, Trades Councils, Co-operative Guilds and representatives from the unemployed.
>
> Only in this way can the campaign develop to the point where representative leadership and organisation can achieve the aims of the campaign.

At the first full meeting of the N.A.C. of the I.L.P. after the Derby Conference, there was full discussion of the agreement for joint action with the C.P., decided upon by the two bodies. " It was evident from the reports before the Council," stated the *New Leader* (May 19), " that the enthusiasm with which the I.L.P. had thrown itself into the work for the united front, had completely absorbed all the energies of the members, with a consequent neglect of the normal specific work of the I.L.P. It was decided that in submitting the agreed proposals for united action to the branches they should be instructed, not only to press them forward energetically, but also to see that the ordinary work of the I.L.P. as a distinct organisation should not be neglected."

(*To be Continued*)

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED.

The Economic Foundations of Fascism. Paul Einzig. (Macmillan & Co.) 156 pp. 7s. 6d.

Socialism. S.P.G.B. 48 pp. 2d.

The Brown Book of the Hitler Terror. (Victor Gollancz.) 352 pp. 5s.

Socialism from Theory to Practice. F. Bransby Carlton, F.R.E.S. 73 pp. 6d.

The Industrial Crisis. Lt. Col. K. E. Edgeworth. (Allen & Unwin.) 207 pp. 5s.

The Moscow Trial. A. J. Cummings. (V. Gollancz.) 287 pp. 10s. 6d.

The Moscow Trial. W. P. Coates. Anglo-Russian Parliamentary Committee. 165 pp. 1s. 6d.

Bedeaux. T.U.C. 16 pp. 2d.

The Co-operative Movement and the Class Struggle. Mrs. E. Henrothe. (Utopia Press, 44 Worship Street, E.C.2.) 23 pp. 1d.

Trade Unionists and the United Front. (The Militant Trade Unionist, 10-11 Fetter Lane, E.C.4.) 16 pp. 1d.

War again To-morrow. Nemo. (Modern Books Ltd.) 32 pp. 1d.

More Anti-Soviet Lies Nailed. W. P. Coates. The Anglo-Russian Parliamentary Committee. 28 pp. 3d.

Some Urgent Problems of the Labour Movement in India. V. Basak. (Modern Books Ltd.) 43 pp. 2d.

The Project of a Planned World. Louis Anderson Penn, M.Sc. (Williams & Norgate.) 72 pp. 2s. 6d.

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BOOK REVIEW

MARXISM AND ECONOMIC GEOGRAPHY.

(1) *Outline of Economic Geography.* Plebs Text Book No. 4, by J. F. Horrabin. (Reprinted and Revised.) 2s. 6d.

ECONOMIC Geography, *i.e.*, the study of the influence of the geographical environment on social development has been grossly neglected by working class theorists and historians, although a considerable amount of literature is available on the subject from bourgeois sources. Yet it should be obvious that questions of climate, vegetation, means of transit and communication, and mineral resources have a profound influence on the development and structure of society. In fact, we have to admit that, however inadequately, this Plebs Outline has been the only attempt made so far to fill the void on workers' bookshelves. When first issued in 1923, the unique character of the work, the fact that it broke fresh ground in Marxist studies, insured for the book a favourable reception. Defects were glossed over in the reasonable anticipation that the further researches of the author would remove the shortcomings. Unfortunately, these anticipations remain unfulfilled, yet to a great extent the uncritical acceptance of the book as a " Marxist " study of the subject remains.

In this recent reprint what in 1923 promised to be the first tentative steps towards a dialectic Marxist treatment of the subject has in 1932 been " revised," by the deletion of even the scanty analysis of the class struggle Horrabin made in 1923. History with the intensification of the class war has marched in one, Horrabin and the N.C.L.C. have marched in the opposite, direction. Theoretical errors which vitiated the value of the book in 1923, instead of being eliminated, have in 1932 become the central features of the author's political line. The revisions have clearly revealed the non-Marxist approach of the author and in fact show clearly that the book is in practice a piece of imperialist propaganda. It is vitally necessary for this now to be understood and for the myth of its Marxist character to be fully exposed.

This non-Marxist character of the book is brought out from the first in the author's line of approach.

Correctly, he states that the " geographical environment " has to be treated as " subsidiary to human history past and present," but on turning to page eleven we read :

> . . . . it may be well to state clearly that the *other* fundamentally important factor in history, the struggle of the classes . . . . does not come directly within our scope in this book.

While thus relegating the " class struggle " to the background the author *emphasises* another aspect of history, namely :

> . . . . a steady progress towards more and more inter-communication between, and a greater and greater inter-dependence of, all peoples of the earth.

So, the history to which the " economic geography " is to be related is a type of history which emphasises " steady " economic progress but eliminates the class struggle. In other words, traditional bourgeois history.

According to the Communist Manifesto " the history of human society, past and present, *has been a history of class struggles.*" Marx wrote to Weydemeyer that previous to himself bourgeois historians had given an " economic anatomy of the classes," but that what he had pointed out new was " *that the*

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existence of classes is bound up with definite historic struggles in the evolution of production" and that the class struggle "*leads necessarily to the Dictatorship of the Proletariat.*"

If, according to history as written by Marx and Engels, the evolution of production is inseparable from the class, how is it possible to relate "geography to history" and not include the class struggle? It is not, unless you falsify history and Marxism! Why, then, is the class struggle thus relegated to the background? Precisely for the reason given by Marx that "the class struggle leads necessarily to the Dictatorship of the Proletariat." As all N.C.L.C. tutors know J. P. M. Millar has sent out a ukase in a circular to Organisers that they must not deal with "Communist propaganda"—which, of course, necessarily involves the Dictatorship of the Proletariat—as to do so means giving "propaganda speeches" instead of "educational lectures."

According to Marx and Engels, social development is the growth of the forces of production, upon the basis of which rise corresponding political, legal and property relations; a superstructure which becomes ossified by tradition and defended by all the forces of reaction, until it "fetters" further development and spreads social decay and intellectual and moral decadence (as to-day), no further progress being possible until this superstructure has been swept away by the "revolutionary violence" of the rising class.

But this is not the type of history to which J.F.H. relates his "geography." Instead of real, living, struggling human beings, studied at each stage in their definite class relationships, we are given the "economic" men of the bourgeois economists, participating in a bloodless, tranquil, "steady growth" of an economic process of development from lower to higher stages. Right throughout the book we are given a picture of "peoples," "groups," &c., engaged in productive activity, with no reference, or at the most a conventional phrase, to the internal social conflicts and class divisions. Marx attacked this line of approach in these words:

> It seems to be the correct procedure to commence with the real and concrete aspect of conditions as they are: in the case of political economy to commence with population which is the basis of society. *Yet on closer consideration it proves wrong. Population is an abstraction if we leave out, e.g., the classes of which it consists.* These classes again are but an empty word unless we know what are the elements on which they are based, such as wage labour, capital, &c. (*The Critique of Political Economy.*)

To Marx, the writing of history in terms of peoples, human beings, States, Nations, &c., was a playing with "abstractions" and "empty words" if at each stage their definite class relationships and productive relationships were not examined. J.F.H. must be aware of this because the *Critique* is widely read in N.C.L.C. circles. Not until a writer takes the geographical data given by the author and relates it to revolutionary history will we have a Marxist Text Book on the subject!

Obviously conscious of his distortion of history the author seeks justification in the plea that the "limitations of the subject" compel him to take the class struggle "as read." At first glance this seems reasonable, until we recall the *Outline of Imperialism*, where a directly political subject is dealt with, and *find an even more extreme separation of economics from politics and an even more superficial analysis of class relationships.* In both books Imperialism is presented as "seizure of colonies," division of the world into "spheres of influence," which, while politically separated are "economically interdependent." Arising from this we get struggles for markets between "economic groups" and

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" zones of friction " where strategic routes cross or frontiers meet. In both books, the " class struggle " is taken as read. The basic theoretic approach is identical in both books.

No one would gather from this book that Imperialism is the era of dying declining capitalism and of the proletarian revolution. In fact, J.F.H. transforms Lenin's phrase " Imperialism, the last stage of Capitalism " into " Imperialism the *latest* stage of Capitalism." In the first issue of this book J.F.H. did mention at one point that Imperialism was a " transitional " stage in history, *but that reference has been cut out of the present issue.*

The result of this " economic " analysis is that the emphasis is concentrated on problems arising from inter-imperialist conflicts, and the problems arising from the conflict between the classes ignored. The further implications of this we will note later.

Immediately, however, it has to be stressed that even after his careful selection of material, the author fails to make a Marxist analysis of the aspects of Imperialism he considers to be of importance for workers. He writes :

> The vital international problems of to-day are, by the very nature of imperialism, the latest phase of capitalism, to a large extent geographical.

A moment's thought will convince any worker that even in the N.C.L.C. " economic " sense, the " problems of production and distribution " are not geographical. Does geographical environment impede the flow of commodities ? By steamships, airplanes, railways, motors, telegraphs, wireless, &c., capitalism has conquered space and annihilated time—has, in the main, overcome the geographical obstacles to regular transit and communication. Methods of food preservation during storage and transit are also highly developed. *Clearly it is not physical barriers such as mountains, plains, rivers and seas that impede production and distribution, but economic barriers.* The plain fact is that the capitalist class will only produce and distribute when they see the possibility of profit !

Is it " geographical distance," the Atlantic Ocean, that stops American wheat being sent to feed European countries ? The ships are there, but they lie idle in the docks ! The wheat is there, it rots in storage or is burned as fuel ! Give the capitalists a prospect of profit and an Armada will cross the Atlantic.

The plain undeniable facts are that Imperialism has in the main already solved the geographical problems arising from world " economic interdependence." Raw materials can be gathered from the ends of the earth, manufactured and again distributed to all points of the compass—*and would be if it were not for the barriers imposed by the existence of the capitalist class itself.* The " vital international problems of to-day " are obviously social, not geographical.

This book claims to enlighten workers on the " vital world problems of to-day." Therefore it is pertinent to ask—what is the most vital international problem of to-day ?

Every Marxist will unhesitatingly answer—*The Problem of Class Power.* Even the World Economic Conference admits this. We live in a transition period. Imperialism, in the words of Lenin, is the last stage of Capitalism, " the immediate forerunner of the socialist revolution." We are in the era of proletarian revolution, *two systems exist side by side*, gigantic class forces are mobilised for battle. " Who will defeat whom " is not a Russian problem *it is the central fundamental issue that faces the whole world.*

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One can then reasonably expect this book to devote some space to this question, if it is to justify the claim made by the author. Strange as it may seem, this problem which overshadows all others to-day, is not even mentioned, far less examined! You can search from cover to cover and find no reference to the fact that the question before all workers is to rule or be ruled! Surely, a Marxist work on Economic Geography would have considered the influence of the geographical environment on the workers' struggle for power even if it did not deal with the question of whether the form of the workers' State should be a democracy or a dictatorship. But apparently the author sees no need for considering the problems of revolutionary defence of a Socialist State against Imperialist aggression. Like all bourgeois historians, the author accepts evolutionary and even revolutionary development of society up to the present, but from that point loses all historical perspective. He becomes blind to the fact that the present epoch is one of revolutionary transition and so devotes no space to the problems of the transition as influenced by geographical environment.

In contrast with this treatment we need only note that for Marx, Engels and Lenin the "key" to correct political understanding was the recognition of the historic need for advancing the proletarian revolution by examining the problems it presented. But, among the very few political conclusions given in this book we find the following:

> The key, then, to a right understanding of modern world problems is a thorough realisation of the *fundamental anachronism of world economy—economic interdependence and political division* (my italics), political division manifesting itself in tariff barriers and methods of financial exchange, which again impedes the flow of materials and goods from one part of the world to another.

One need not quote chapter and verse to show how unanimously the delegates to the World Economic Conference agree with the author, their speeches will still be fresh in most workers' minds. We will, however, set this conclusion side by side with Engel's formulation:

Outline of Economic Geography	Socialism, Utopian and Scientific
(a) *Fundamental Anachronism.* Economic interdependence and political division.	(a) *Fundamental Antagonism* (from which arises *all* antagonisms). Social organisation in individual factory—anarchy in production as a whole.
(b) *Manifesting itself in* Tariff barriers and financial methods of exchange.	(b) *Manifesting itself in* Antagonisms between bourgeoisie and proletariat.
(c) *Solution of Anachronism.* None given, but obvious deduction —lower tariffs and international co-operation.	(c) *Solution of Contradiction.* Proletarian revolution.

But one must not conclude that because J.F.H. thus differs from Engels he has not authority on his side:

> All nations are realising more and more that they are economically interdependent, but despite this encouraging fact, we have not found a fully effective form of international co-operation. (H.R.H. The Prince of Wales, F.B.I. Banquet, February 21, 1933.)

Once more we see that the "economic interdependence" theory serves to cloak from the workers the fact that the fundamental problem which faces us is how to accomplish the transition to "a higher form of society." This occurs so frequently in the book that it must definitely be considered as the *political line* round which the book has been built up.

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We have not, however, exhausted the author's fundamental " anachronisms." He writes that Nationalism, not of Hitler and Beaverbrook, be it noted, *but of India and Ireland* (countries specifically mentioned by the writer), has to be " squared with twentieth century economic needs " ; although it had a " real material basis in the days when agriculture was the predominent industry and horse-drawn traffic the sole means of land transport," it is an " anachronism in the days of coal, iron and railroads " (page 58).

Could any Imperialist write more foully ? Could a Churchill cast a bigger slander at revolutionary Nationalism ?

Let us inform you, Comrade Horrabin, that the revolutionary Nationalism of India and Ireland has a " real material basis " in the ruthless suppression, bloody terrorism and economic exploitation of British Imperialism. It is Imperialism that holds back the development of the colonies. The revolutionary National Movements are the political reflection of a determination of these subject areas to remove the " anachronism " of Imperialist domination which stops them reaching the stage of " coal, iron and railroads." Who maintains the anachronism of feudal landlordism in India, who is the real power behind the Princes ? British Imperialism. British guns, airplanes and rifles support their tottering thrones ! Only in relation to *imperialist needs* are the national revolutionary movements an " anachronism." Proof of this is seen in the gigantic economic and cultural development of the " subject nations " of Czardom, liberated by the October revolution.

Further, does any revolutionary worker doubt that, freed from Imperialist oppression, the proletarian revolution in the colonies would tread fast on the heels of the national revolution ? Does any worker doubt that victory of the National Revolution in India would shake British Imperialism to its very foundations and tremendously accelerate the proletarian revolution in Britain itself ? Any worker who can see these things realises that, far from being an " anachronism," the colonial national revolutions are the allies of the social revolution. But these mighty revolutionary forces, without whose support the workers could never overthrow capitalism, are considered by the N.C.L.C. to be an " anachronism," a hang-over from the eighteenth century. On this basis, the Meerut prisoners are on the side of a " reactionary anachronism," while J. H. Thomas is fighting to keep Ireland in line with " twentieth century economic needs." Need more be said ?

Space forbids further analysis of the many other distortions of Marxism to be found in this work. We will conclude by stating that practically every alteration from the previous issue has been a deletion to cut out even the scanty references to the class struggle and the revolution. In fact, the final chapter of the previous issue giving the author's political conclusions *has been completely cut out*.

In this final chapter the author referred to the fact that the enemy is " capitalist Imperialism " and that the class struggle " necessitates a world General Staff for the Workers' Movement." This was obviously a carefully covered reference to the Communist International.

So, even mild left-wing political statements are not allowed by the N.C.L.C., but have to be deleted. The actual conclusions to which the political line of the book necessarily leads we have already seen.

J. R. S.

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